

SPORT

FEB.
1978
75¢

PERFORMER OF THE YEAR

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
Los Angeles Lakers

TOP PERFORMERS OF 1977

Mario Andretti
auto racing

Earl Campbell
college football

Rod Carew
baseball

Steve Cauthen
horse racing

Chris Evert
tennis

Marques Johnson
college basketball

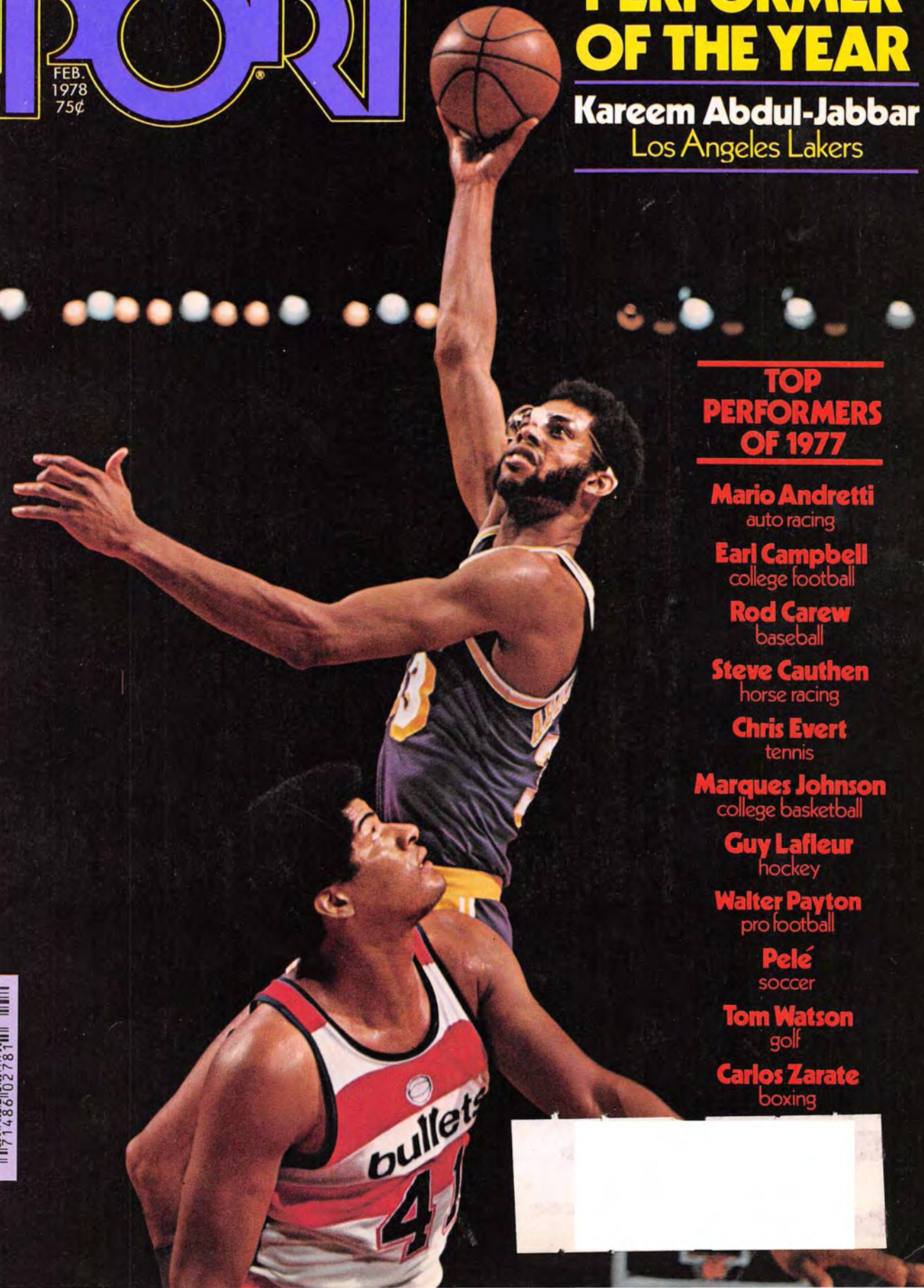
Guy Lafleur
hockey

Walter Payton
pro football

Pelé
soccer

Tom Watson
golf

Carlos Zarate
boxing



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Winston Lights. Winston Light 100's.

Home runs are a mistake

by Reggie Jackson

To err is divine.

This may surprise you, but a home run is actually a mistake! Instead of hitting the ball smack on the button, you've caught it slightly below dead center.

When I hit the ball dead center, I don't get a home run. I get a screaming line drive. Which is also quite pleasant.

You'll hear people say that you've got to swing up at the ball to belt it a long way. I don't agree. To get under a knee-high ball, your shoulder has to dip. You'll be awkward, and you may not get a hit at all. Swing up at a higher ball and you'll probably foul it off or pop it up.

Always swing slightly *down* on the ball. It's a shorter stroke, so it gives you more time to wait on the pitch. And you'll cut down the chances of overswinging or putting a hitch in your swing. (An exception to this would be when you want to hit a sacrifice fly, but that's pretty advanced stuff and difficult to hit.)



Don't.

Don't try for distance. Ever. The long ball is generally the result of natural gifts. In my case, strength. If you press for distance that's beyond your natural capacity, you reduce the chances of making contact.

Don't use a bat that's too heavy. Hitting power comes from bat speed, not size.

Pick one that's light enough to whip into the ball. I'm strong enough to swing a 42-ounce club, but I don't. I prefer the control I get with a 36-ounce bat...or sometimes even a 35-ouncer.

Don't mimic idols. You could be forcing your body to go against its own natural style. It could slow down your learning process.

If you can't read, you can't hit.

A fastball is travelling maybe 90 miles an hour. A sinker will do about 85. A slider, around 75 to 80. A curve ball, 60. And a change-up, maybe 50 miles an hour.

So right there you have five different kinds of speeds that you have to be able to recognize instantly by reading the rotation on the ball.

Don't watch the pitcher's hand if you want to see the ball early.

Watch the area where he's going to release the ball.

I first start to see the ball about 10 or 15 feet after it leaves his hand. By the time it's halfway to the plate, I pick up the rotation of the ball...and my brain automatically calculates the speed and starts computing my stride and setting the timing of my swing.

It all has to happen in a tiny fraction of a second. Which is why hitting a baseball isn't easy.

But if you can't read the ball, you can't hit it.

Reggie Jackson (aided by Joel Cohen) is the author of *Inside Hitting*, a comprehensive guide to hitting techniques.

The big stripe.

Your legs are the strongest part of your body.

When they get tired, your whole body gets tired. That's why a good shoe is so important.

It won't sap your strength—and speed—the way a poor shoe can.

I helped Puma® design their baseball shoes, and I was probably the first player to wear them, back in 1973.

Just about everyone I know will slit his baseball shoe for comfort. But I can put Puma on and not worry about a blister from the very first day.

They're light and flexible for foot speed. Yet they're strong enough so your feet and legs don't take a beating and get tired quickly.

Should you wear Puma? My opinion is, if you take pride in how you play, you've earned your stripe. You've earned the right to wear Puma.

The Puma
'World Series'



puma®

You've earned your stripe



ESPOSITO AND RABBIT ARE QUICK WITH A STICK.

His shots have been clocked at

90 mph. But the way Phil Esposito moves is something you have to see for yourself.

The same's true for the Volkswagen Rabbit. You can know all the statistics, like it hops from 0 to 50 in 8.3 seconds* (auto. trans. 9.5 seconds), but the way it maneuvers is something the numbers won't tell you.

Even Esposito can't tell you why he's so good at what he does. But he credits a lot of his success to the way he's built.

We credit a lot of Rabbit's success to the way it's built, too. Like giving it front wheel drive for better tracking stability. Or the engine being put in sideways for more room. And fuel injection. Which makes the Rabbit very quick with — or without — a stick.

Of course, build isn't everything. There's attitude.

Esposito isn't fazed by all the records he'll make or break this season.

Rabbit has some records of its own. The Rabbit Diesel set 31 world records for diesels in Miramas, France.

And then there's stamina.

Esposito has the drive and ability to maintain his high standards time and time again.

Which is just about the situation here at Volkswagen, too.

VOLKSWAGEN DOES IT AGAIN.



*Rabbit Diesel accelerates from 0 to 50 in 11.5 seconds. ©VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA, INC.



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SPORT®

32ND YEAR OF PUBLICATION FEB. 1978 VOL. 66, NO. 2

16 Performer of the Year, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

The performance of the man who led last season's rag-tag Lakers to an astounding record was in line with his expanding off-court life. The master of the sky hook now not only appears on *Laugh-In*—his slick moves reveal blessed hints of hot dog!

BY BARRY FARRELL

18 Top Performers of 1977

Mario Andretti—auto racing. **Earl Campbell**—college football. **Rod Carew**—baseball. **Steve Cauthen**—horse racing. **Chris Evert**—tennis. **Marques Johnson**—college basketball. **Guy Lafleur**—hockey. **Walter Payton**—pro football. **Pelé**—soccer. **Tom Watson**—golf. **Carlos Zarate**—boxing.

36 King Nicklaus and the great pretender

During his 16-year reign as the world's premier golfer, Jack Nicklaus has fought off every challenger bent on usurping his crown. But now his concentration is suspect, and the prince who would be king is Tom Watson

BY DAVE ANDERSON

45 Life in a game situation

Atlanta Hawks coach Hubie Brown is a great teacher whose lessons blend basketball technique with personal development. "You decide if you have the guts, the courage, the stamina to pursue success," he tells ballplayers. "It takes one hell of a man to strive and be defeated and frustrated and to continue striving"

BY RICHARD O'CONNOR

50 "You got to look in the mirror"

That's the guiding principle of the Colts' fine tight end, Raymond Chester, whose concern for others is as consuming as his on-field drive to "kick ass"—which he does with distinct glee

BY ROBERT WARD

58 A fan's guide to pro basketball

The game is so fast and the offenses and defenses so complex that we follow the bouncing ball and miss 90 percent of what's really going on in the NBA. Here—in the first of a three-part series—the author helps us understand the breakneck chess matches the top teams play

BY CHARLEY ROSEN

66 The NHL scramble to catch the Swedish Express

Anders Hedberg, who scored 83 goals for the WHA's Winnipeg Jets last season, can't be legally signed by NHL teams until the end of this season. But several teams have already begun trying to flag down the swift rightwinger.

BY EARL MCRAE

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LETTERS TO SPORT

VOTES FOR WOODY'S NOTES

When I saw that Woody Allen had written a story for you ("A fan's notes on Earl Monroe," November) I naturally assumed that it was going to be humorous. That it was not, and that it was the best basketball article I've read in ages, were totally unexpected. It is too bad that he is so successful as a director-actor-humorist that sportswriting can only be an occasional fling for him. But what an occasion!

Elmer Bataitis
Rochester, N.Y.

A lead article on a man the writer has never met!—"A fan's notes on Earl Monroe." Only SPORT and Woody Allen could pull it off so successfully. You should hire him full time.

Larry Simpson
Buffalo, N.Y.

I commend SPORT for its article by Woody Allen. This is the type of article I've been waiting to read for years. Woody did a superb job expressing his feelings about Earl the Pearl.

Clark Smith
Hacienda Heights, Calif.

Woody Allen's article was excellent. I enjoyed reading it and hope that you will have more celebrities do this kind of article on sports personalities.

Jeff Lawrence
Richmond, Ind.

Congratulations to Woody Allen and SPORT for an excellent article on an excellent ballplayer. I'd like to see more articles by Woody Allen in your magazine. Besides being a super comedian, he's a fine sportswriter.

Jeff Cohen
Pennsauken, N.J.

TEARS AND CHEERS FOR A GLOBETROTTER

Upon receiving the November SPORT, I gleaned the table of contents to choose which article I would read first. My choice was "Requiem for a Globetrotter" by Peter Goldman. It was a good one. Goldman is to be commended for his reincarnation of Leon Hillard. The piece really brought tears to my eyes. Just another example of the quality journalism your magazine has been synonymous with.

Alan E. Sheehan
Address withheld

"Requiem for a Globetrotter" was outstanding, perhaps the finest story I've ever read in your magazine.

I'm 23 years old, not old enough to know of Leon Hillard. But after reading your superb article, I'm sure I missed a great performer. Leon Hillard was a super man.

John Pinciotti
Toledo, Ohio

Most noteworthy in November's SPORT was Peter Goldman's requiem for Leon Hillard. Hip and unsentimental, it was a graceful and touching tribute to a man whose heart must have been as big and simple as a basketball.

Mark Woldin
South Orange, N.J.

I commend Peter Goldman for his great article on Leon

SPORT

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SPORT PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY MVP SPORTS INC. A SUBSIDIARY OF DOWNE COMMUNICATIONS INC. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

EXECUTIVE, ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL OFFICES AT 641 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022. RAYMOND K. MASON, CHAIRMAN; DON HANRAHAN, PUBLISHER; DAN McNAMEE, CIRCULATION DIRECTOR; JOHN VETTOSO, CONTROLLER; ELLEN BAAR JACOBS, RESEARCH DIRECTOR; MICHAEL RICH, PROMOTION DIRECTOR. ADVERTISING OFFICES ALSO AT 1025 EAST MAPLE STREET, BIRMINGHAM, MICH. 48011; 444 N. MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601; 2902 CARLISLE STREET, DALLAS, TEXAS 75204; AND 8290 SUNSET BOULEVARD, LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90028.

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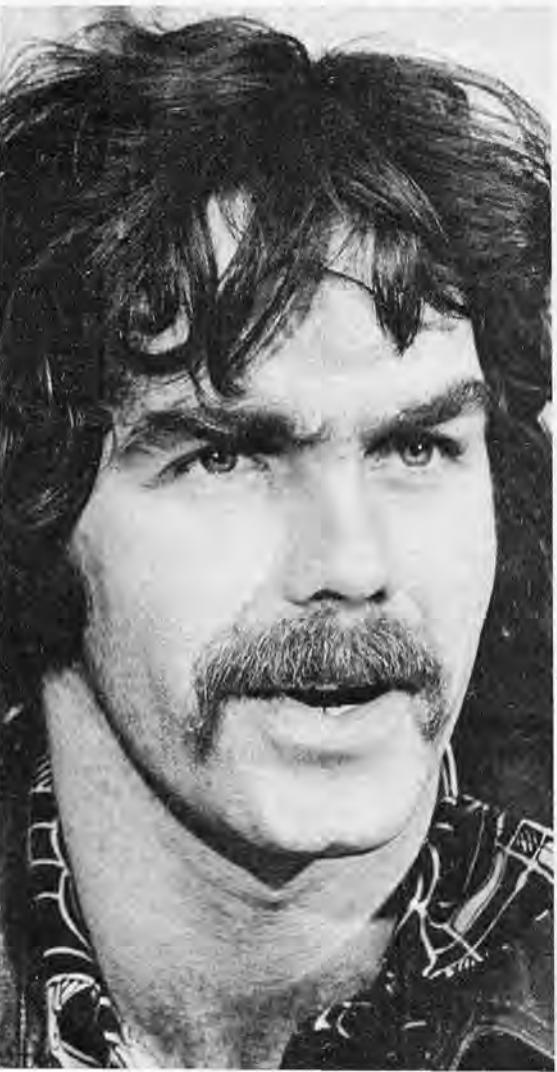
SPORT TALK

DEREK, WE HARDLY KNEW YE

Derek Sanderson was sitting at a corner table in Suydams restaurant in New York City. He was chain-smoking Benson & Hedges and chain-sipping Lite beer. At his side sat a pretty blond girl-friend who had modeled for *Cosmo* and who called Derek "a man's man." Across from him was a three-piece, pinstriped dandy who called himself Derek's "attorney" and who slurred his drink orders.

Neither of them could offer much solace to ex-hockey star Sanderson, who was now in his fourth overtime at the restaurant this afternoon and breathing heavy. Just ten years ago, he had broken into the National Hockey League with the Boston Bruins. He had signed a million-dollar contract with the World Hockey Association's Philadelphia franchise in 1972, then had returned to the

Derek Sanderson, the NHL's Rookie of the Year in 1967-68 with Boston, may have run out of teams who'll have him.



Bruins and subsequently played for the Rangers, the St. Louis Blues and, finally, after a brief demotion to the minors last season, the Vancouver Canucks. This year there were no more teams to play on. The NHL's Rookie of the Year in 1967-68 appeared finished. He is 31.

I asked Sanderson why he had been dropped from his last team, the Vancouver Canucks, and his thick, brown eyebrows raised up like high sticks. He moved his face to within a filter tip of mine and screamed: "DID YOU EVER SHIT IN A BAG?"

No one had ever asked me that, not even on my driving test. "A paper bag?" I stammered.

He looked disgusted. "A PLASTIC BAG," he shouted, "... a colostomy bag. That's what I'm up against." He spread open his jean jacket, placed his hands at the waistband of his slacks and ran them across his trim hips. "I have chronic ulcerative colitis. I shit BLOOD. That's what happens when you push yourself."

"What can you do about it?" I asked.

"Not much. I've had it for six years. . . . I've seen 12 doctors. I have to rest a lot, get a lot of sleep. . . . Last year I spent two weeks in the hospital, came out and played and had to go right back in. But this year I was in good shape for training camp. When I got there they asked me how many cigarettes I smoked. I said, 'Two packs,' so they hooked me up to this inclined treadmill at Simon Fraser University and had me run. RUN! I'd like somebody to tell me what the hell running has to do with playing hockey. When Kipno Kenya [sic] or whatever the hell his name is comes over here to run from Africa, do they put him on a pair of skates before they let him run?"

"Do they always put you on a treadmill right away?" I asked.

"No f---ing way," Derek said, taking a slug of beer. "It's never been done. Then they wanted me to take a blood test. Suppose I took a blood test and I had contracted syphilis the week before, or I had leukemia or cancer. . . . You think I want that result blared around in all the newspapers? No f---ing way. You think I want you sportswriters smearing it all over the place? I told 'em to forget it. So they say I tested out at 42.1 on the treadmill and that I wasn't in the proper physical condition to play . . . based on only half the f---ing test. If the doctors wanted to push me, maybe I could play a year or two, but then I might wind up SHITTING IN A GODDAMN BAG!"

Derek stubbed out a butt in the ashtray. He nuzzled his bottle of beer, then lit another cigarette.

"Let's see if you're a man or whether you're like all the others," he said, then reached over, grabbed my note pad and began reading. "You got the general stuff," he said after a few seconds, but then shook his head and added, "but

you missed the details. You just got the sensational stuff." He tore my pad into tiny pieces and shoved them, like crumbs, toward the middle of the table.

His "attorney" pocketed the scraps of paper and left. Derek ordered another beer and dinner for his girl and himself.

"What are the only five words in the English language which have five letters and begin with a 'p' and end with a 'p'?" he asked, wolfing down a steak.

"Plump . . . primp . . ." began the model, taking out a pad and writing down the words.

"You'll never get all of 'em, and I won't tell you what they are," Derek said. He finished his meal and rose. "I gotta be going," he said.

"Baby, who's going to pay for the meal? Let me have your credit card," his girlfriend said.

"My credit card?" Derek said. "No way."

He left her with the check. He needed his credit card. He was headed for Boston, to see his attorney.

—Roger Director

ASK BILL LEE

Boston Red Sox pitcher Bill Lee responds to this month's question: "Would you accept women playing in the major leagues?"

"It's great for women to compete in sports with men, but until someone comes up with a hormone to stop the biological changes that take place in women at around the age of 16 to reduce the development of an extra 30 percent of fatty tissue, I don't think they'll be able to do it. I'd react the same way if a woman hit a homer off me as I do when a guy does. The next time up I'd knock her down—unless it was my dear old mum."

Send your questions to Bill Lee in care of SPORT, 641 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022, and we'll print more of his responses each month.

THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE

When Gallaudet College of Washington, D.C., plays a football game its fans do not cheer, the players on the sidelines do not say anything. The only sound is a drumbeat that tells the players when to snap the ball. They move by sensing the drum's vibrations instead of their quarterback's cadence because the whole team—like the rest of Gallaudet's students—is deaf.

Though they have only won one game in the last two years, Gallaudet has a highly regarded NFL prospect—6-foot-2, 255-pound senior Dan Fitzpatrick, a defensive tackle who also plays offensive tackle and placekicks. He has been scouted by the Philadelphia Eagles, the New York Giants and the NFL's United Scouting Service.

When Gallaudet played Newport News Apprentice School of Ship-



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The tobacco, the filter, and even the paper.

Only by concentrating on these parts were we able to perfect the whole.

The Tobacco. "Flavor Packing"™ plus fifteen tobaccos boost taste.

Take the tobacco, for example. Its taste is boosted by a very unique method called "Flavor Packing" which allows us to concentrate a special patented tobacco flavorant in each Decade cigarette.

The Filter. Unique "Taste Channel" gives first puff impact.

Our filtration process is also unique. Simply, we've created a "Taste Channel" within the filter to give you that first puff impact you've come to expect from only the higher 'tar' cigarettes.

The Paper. High porosity paper controls burn rate.

Even our high porosity paper is specifically designed to give an efficient burn rate that delivers optimum taste with a minimum of 'tar.'

The result.

A completely new kind of low 'tar' cigarette.

So try a pack of Decade for yourself. Regular or Menthol. And after one taste we think you'll agree that our last 10 years were well worth the effort.



Regular and Menthol.

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SPORT TALK

building, two and three players often combined to try blocking Fitzpatrick. "We were really afraid of Fitz and tried to run the other way," said Newport News coach Norm Snead, the former NFL quarterback. "Fitz has a good chance at making the pros."

Gallaudet football coach Paul Smiley is confident that Fitzpatrick will make it. "You get used to not hearing anything," Smiley said. "I think Dan will adjust well to the NFL. He will be like Bonnie Sloan, who was deaf and played for the St. Louis Cardinals."

In college football, deafness has not been a problem for Fitzpatrick, who has found ways of using his handicap. "If I don't like the guy I am playing against, I will pretend that I don't 'hear' the whistle and will hit him anyway," Fitzpatrick said in sign language with Smiley interpreting. "The refs don't call the late hits on a deaf squad."

Fitzpatrick, who can bench-press 350 pounds, is a versatile athlete. Last summer, at the Olympics for the Handicapped in Rumania, he won a silver medal in the shotput. In high school he pitched on the baseball team. When the opposing runners on second base discovered that he was deaf they would get a big jump and steal third base. "The shortstop would yell out the pickoff move or that he was stealing and I couldn't hear it," Fitzpatrick said. "It was frustrating, but we adjusted by making hand signals."

The adjustment might not come so easily in the pros. In a phone conversation, Herman Ball, the director of player personnel for the Eagles, read SPORT the scouting report on Fitzpatrick: "He has good body control and quickness off the ball," Ball read. "He is aggressive and loves contact." Then Ball's voice trailed off and almost apologetically went on: "He can't hear or speak. It might be a problem on audibles."

—Ira Rosen

THE TWELFTH MAN

The tall, curly-haired young man in the Mexican sweater and jeans hunched over the end of the bar at Toots Shor's across from Madison Square Garden last November looked like a college freshman waiting for the last train home for the holidays. He was attempting to mute his forlorn expression with scotch whisky, but it wasn't doing much good. An hour before he had been sipping water out of a paper cup at the end of the Nets' bench as his team lost to the Knicks, 101-90. Mark Crow, a 6-7, 210-pound forward from Duke, was hanging around Shor's as he'd been hanging around the Nets' bench: Averaging only

ten minutes per game and waiting for the NBA's twelfth-man cut that might end his pro career before it got started.

"I'm kind of lucky to be on the team," Crow told me when I asked him about his chances of staying with the Nets. "You know, I was only a sixth-round draft choice, I'm not a great rebounder, and I've never been a good shooter. . . . The one thing I have going in my favor is that I'm not making a big salary."

Crow had already been cut once this season—in France. After a brutal summer of European-style hoop conditioning (twice-a-day workouts), he was dropped by Asvel of Lyon.

"It sort of shattered my confidence," Crow said, "because I figured I could go over to Europe and play and be very happy. Sure, I was upset—and coming to the Nets, I wasn't bubbling with confidence." But Crow arrived in top shape and made the squad. Of course, instead of trotting across France with the European Cup champs, he was playing in Piscataway, N.J., for a struggling team.

"The native players in Europe, they're nothing," Crow said with a smile. "You're playing against one other guy—the American on the other team. But in the NBA, it's like joining a fraternity. You have to pay your dues."

Crow's chances of staying with the Nets improved at this night's Knick game when 6-8 forward Jan van Breda Kolff went down with a sprained ankle.

Exiting the dimly lit saloon, we boarded a dirty subway car to our respective destinations. "You know, from where I live in Jersey, I'm closer to the Garden than to our home court," Crow shouted over the noise. "By the way, where do you go in this town to meet people?" Off the top of my head, I suggested a few East Side singles bars. But then the doors opened at the Times Square stop—and onto the train stepped one of Crow's pals from Duke.

"Hey!" he said, pumping Crow's hand, "what are you doing here?"

Crow, his face suddenly aglow, started telling his friend about France . . . and about how nice it had been playing ball at Duke.

A few weeks later, the 3-22 Nets put Crow on waivers.

—Len Albin

CONDITIONS AND COMMENTS

■ Former Marquette basketball coach Al McGuire, now vice-chairman of Medalist Industries, on the similarities between business and basketball: "Business is a game, and not as serious as basketball. The biggest difference is that in business you go around the barn on things while in basketball the approach is direct. In both, you got people sitting around a table getting their pipes out and talking as if they know something. But compared to basketball, business is a piece of cake."

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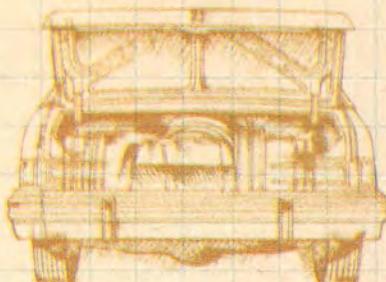


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The Marines.**

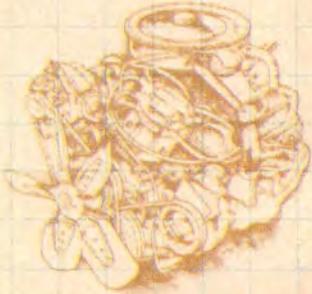
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Oldsmobile Delta 88. The family car we build by beginning with the family.

Oldsmobile
Delta 88
Can we build one for you?

LETTERS TO SPORT

(Continued from page 4)

Hillard. It was one of the finest stories I have read in a long time, and shows there are still some people left in this world who care about other people.

Doug Addington
Farmland, Ind.

Peter Goldman's article was a beautiful and moving story. I pray that the Lord sends the world more Leon Hillards. He was one great guy.

E.P. Martinex
Colorado Springs, Col.

FLOODS ON FLOOD

Your article in the November issue ("The legacy of Curt Flood") was an excellent one, but you claim that the painting behind Flood is a self-portrait when, in reality, it is a portrait of Lou Brock!

Bob Trimble
Athens, Ohio

The article by Curt Flood and Stu Black should be framed and posted on the wall at baseball's Hall of Fame. Flood proved himself to be among the greatest of players and also a great American. Thanks to SPORT for giving details not previously revealed.

Ed Ritter
Miami, Fla.

Curt Flood had a brilliant major-league career, but his importance is better measured by his lawsuit against baseball. Flood is a model for others who believe that an unjust status quo should be challenged and changed. By standing up for his rights and the rights of others, Curt Flood has done our society an invaluable service.

Jeff Robertson
Park Forest, Ill.

Thank you for publicizing the fact that Curt Flood left a greater impact on sports than any Hall of Famer. It was a great article about a human being's fight for freedom and justice. I only wish that the Players Association, or every free agent, would remember Curt Flood. The recognition and gratitude that the ball-players owe Flood would mean a lot to him.

R.G. Stallings
Greenville, N.C.

Congratulations for a long overdue article on the great Curt Flood. Every baseball player today owes him a debt of gratitude. It's time these guys started paying their debts.

Margaret Crawford
Auburn, Ky.

PAYTON PLAUDITS

The article on Walter Payton by Paul Bellow ("Walter Payton: The dancing Bear," December) was superb. It's about time that the public got to know about Chicago's own superstar.

When Payton came along the fans compared him to O.J. Simpson or Gale Sayers, but by now the fans should realize that Payton has a style of his own that shows his greatness. Payton has found a place of his own.

Dan Frank
Niles, Ill.

I don't think there's a man who can match Walter Payton. He's super.

Howard Gorman
Stoughton, Mass.

HOLMES FEEDBACK

Re Ernie Holmes ("Kill the quarterback, save the children," December): Frenchy Fuqua summed it up precisely. Holmes is a giant man with the mind of a baby. To me, his actions seem to say: "If I don't get my own way, I'll smash everyone's toys and daddy will make everything all right."

"Daddy" Dan Rooney should be nominated for sainthood for the compassion he has shown this man-child.

Bob Bishara
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

FAIR PLAY FOR RECEIVERS

I really enjoyed your article on Oakland quarterback Ken Stabler ("I like the whole load on me," December), but I think more credit should be given to his receivers Fred Biletnikoff, Cliff Branch and Dave Casper. They are the ones who make him so good.

Joe Priebe
Rochester, Minn.

SLY FOX FAN

Congratulations on your excellent article on Fred "The Fox" Snowden ("Nobody traps the Sly Fox," December). I had the pleasure of playing basketball under Snowden at Northwestern High School in Detroit, and was involved in some of the winning streaks that were mentioned in the article. We didn't have great basketball teams, but we played our hearts out for Snowden because he was the "Man." He could relate to us not only on the basketball level, but also as a human being and as a man trying to get ahead in life.

John "Hawk" Hawkins
Chicago, Ill.

METS MESS

I read the article in the November issue, "The year the Mets lost 'The Franchise.'" I am a young and dedicated Met fan. I had heard practically everything you printed at least once and I'm tired of it all. I'm tired of hearing about Young, Grant and Seaver! It was a long, sad and

bitter story, but it's over with now. No trade hit me with the impact of the Seaver trade, but it's all in the game of baseball.

L. Pohutsky
N. Plainfield, N.J.

I thank SPORT and Paul Good for your fine article and the closest-to-the-truth writing that I have read on the Tom Seaver deal. Good took time to research his article and tell it the way it really was.

His references to Dick Young are to the point. My own feeling is that Young does not care if the full truth is given to the readers.

Happy Reader
Massapequa, N.Y.

Good's article told it like it was. I felt that the Seaver trade was outrageous even though I have become a Steve Henderson fan. Getting youth and speed were the right moves for a rebuilding team, but trading "The Franchise" was completely ridiculous. M. Donald Grant is a power-crazy old man, and Young is just Grant's puppet.

Steve Sadiccio
Brooklyn, N.Y.

GRAMBLING RAMBLINGS

I enjoyed your article about Grambling football coach Eddie Robinson ("Never make an excuse," November), but I would like to point out one error regarding Grambling's record against white teams. In the 1965 Pecan Bowl the Sons of North Dakota State beat Grambling, 20-7. Hope you will set the record straight. Thank you.

Jim Walsh
Fargo, N.D.

I congratulate you on a most enjoyable November issue. I especially enjoyed the article, "Never make an excuse," about coach Eddie Robinson. Articles such as this keep me buying SPORT.

Michael Fox
Nelliston, N.Y.

THIS SPORTING LIFE

After having subscribed to SPORT for over a year, I can only offer one suggestion for its improvement: Make it a weekly! No other publication contains such frank and fascinating closeup profiles. You write about the heroes as human beings, reminding the reader that an athlete is a real person, living a real life, with real problems and real dreams. In fact, he is a lot like us little guys, so maybe we aren't so little after all.

K.E. Swift
Chagrin Falls, Ohio

Letters To SPORT
641 Lexington Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10022

THE SPORT QUIZ

GRADE YOURSELF

18-20 EXCELLENT
15-17 VERY GOOD
12-14 FAIR

1. Which player was *not* a No. 1 overall draft pick in his sport?

- a.** Terry Bradshaw
- b.** Guy Lafleur



Tommy Heinsohn

- c.** Bob McAdoo
- d.** Rick Monday

2. When Heidi interrupted the 1968 Jets-Oakland game on NBC the score was:

- a.** Oakland 36, Jets 32
- b.** Jets 32, Oakland 29
- c.** Jets 29, Oakland 29

3. Which one of these tennis players swings lefthanded?

- a.** Rosie Casals
- b.** Virginia Wade
- c.** Martina Navratilova

4. Which of the following coaches led the NBA in technical fouls (42) during the 1976-77 season?

- a.** Hubie Brown (Hawks)
- b.** Tommy Heinsohn (Celtics)
- c.** Kevin Loughery (Nets)

5. Match these NBA personalities with their real first names:

a. Butch Beard	1. Ulysses
b. Junior Bridgeman	2. Alfred
c. Cotton Fitzsimmons	3. David
d. Corky Calhoun	4. Lowell

6. Who was selected first in the 1967 NHL expansion draft?

- a.** Glenn Hall (Blues)
- b.** Terry Sawchuck (Kings)
- c.** Cesare Maniago (North Stars)

7. Which NBA player played an entire game—48 minutes—the most times (10) last season?

- a.** Artis Gilmore
- b.** Billy Knight
- c.** Pete Maravich

8. Who is the only active player to score two penalty shot goals in his NHL career?

- a.** Bobby Clarke
- b.** John Bucyk
- c.** Pete Mahovlich

9. Which player does *not* wear 00 on his uniform?

- a.** John Davidson, N.Y. Rangers
- b.** Ken Burrough, Houston Oilers
- c.** Otis Sistrunk, Oakland Raiders
- d.** Robert Parish, Golden St. Warriors

10. Which of these NBA players once led the league in steals?

- a.** Paul Westphal
- b.** Larry Steele
- c.** Walt Frazier

11. Name the first man to play for both the New York baseball Giants and the New York football Giants.

12. Who is the all-time scoring leader (358 points) in NCAA postseason basketball tournaments?

- a.** Oscar Robertson (Cincinnati)
- b.** Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (UCLA)
- c.** Elvin Hayes (Houston)

13. Which of these players scored at least one touchdown, safety, field goal and extra point in his NFL career?

- a.** Lou Groza
- b.** Lou Michaels

Kevin Loughery



- c.** Sam Baker

14. Which player has been with the most *different* (8) ABA and NBA teams?

- a.** Johnny Neumann
- b.** Tom Owens
- c.** Mack Calvin

15. Which of these teams was the only champion of the World Football League?

- a.** Birmingham Americans
- b.** Florida Blazers
- c.** Memphis Southmen

16. Which college basketball power



Hubie Brown

had the most alumni in NBA uniforms at the start of this season?

- a.** North Carolina
- b.** Kentucky
- c.** UCLA

17. Which Yankee was *not* present at the 1957 fight at the Copacabana?

- a.** Whitey Ford
- b.** Moose Skowron
- c.** Billy Martin
- d.** Hank Bauer

18. Who leads all active NHL goal-tenders in career shutouts?

- a.** Tony Esposito
- b.** Ed Giacomin
- c.** Bernie Parent

19. Which NBA player holds the single-season mark for blocked shots—393?

- a.** George Johnson
- b.** Elmore Smith
- c.** Moses Malone

20. Which player has rushed for the most career yards (16,116) in pro football history?

- a.** O.J. Simpson
- b.** George Reed
- c.** Jim Brown

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME
TR7



PERFORMER OF THE YEAR

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

by BARRY FARRELL

Dinah was delighted with his discourse on antique rugs. Merv found him so engaging that they talked for 20 minutes instead of the usual ten. Everybody loved him on *Laugh-In*. NBC had him in mind for a series of sports documentaries. The Los Angeles *Times Sunday Magazine* hoped he'd write another article soon. When he made his acting debut as a guest star on *Man from Atlantis*, critics remarked on how superbly he filled the screen. The Dodgers crowded around to meet him when he dropped by for batting practice, and on nights when he turned up at Hollywood's most exclusive private disco, movie stars and rock stars were pleased to be seen at his table. Life was getting larger every day for the man one producer called "this interesting, absorbing, marketable guy." About the only place where he wasn't sure of his welcome was out on a basketball court.

A year or two ago, it would have seemed that if any achievement was beyond the long reach of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar it was becoming a marketable guy. He was without doubt basketball's premiere player—in the minds of many, the greatest player of all time. Yet he seemed oddly cold where one looked to see the fire, and in his towering reserve there was something easy to mistake for hostility or scorn, for a sullen reluctance to take real pleasure in his powers. In the course of leading UCLA to three straight national championships, he was twice named Collegiate Player of the Year, and in his six seasons playing for Milwaukee he was the National Basketball Association Rookie of the Year and three times the league's Most Valuable Player; even so, the impression lingered on that he was somehow holding back,

The performance of the man who led last season's rag-tag Lakers to an astounding record was in line with his expanding off-court life. The master of the sky hook now not only appears on *Laugh-In*—his slick moves reveal blessed hints of hot dog!

keeping himself in check, sulking his way toward greatness. So when the Lakers announced in the summer of 1975 that the Abdul-Jabbar they were bringing back to Los Angeles was "a super new center with a super new attitude," it seemed a way of saying that along with a legend to live up to, Kareem had one to live down.

Cheerful new exuberance is a lot to ask of an athlete so solidly established as his sport's commanding figure. But since Kareem's first game as a Laker, his play has been sparked with a feeling of passion that seems to grow apace with his expanding life away from the court. He steals the ball on sudden mid-court challenges, blocks shots 20 feet from the basket, lopes the length of the floor with his island-hopping dribble to score layups, glad as a guard. His slamdunks still tear through the net like meteorites, and his sky hooks still waft in like gulls; but now he has some slick moves to go with them, pivots and twirls and fade-away jump shots, blessed hints of hot dog. When things go well, he exults with schoolyard freedom, slapping hands with his teammates, raising conquering fists to the crowd. And,

when things go badly, he is not shy in showing his anger, letting fly at referees, fighting with opposing players, even leaping the bench one bad night in Buffalo to take after a bothersome fan. Beset with a mounting conviction that the knees and elbows and grabbing, gouging hands that the NBA's many roustabouts and "enforcers" direct his way are intentionally tolerated by referees seeking to neutralize his domination of the game, Kareem of late has lashed out in word and deed against what he calls the officials' "double standard" in calling fouls—one set of rules for him, another for his tormentors. Many of the players who attempt to guard him obviously think so, too, since they go at their work in the spirit of nightclub bouncers. But not all Kareem's recent displays of temper can be understood as ripostes. Instead, one senses that in freeing the genie of his super new attitude, he has also uncorked some long-concealed furies.

In roughhouse games, Kareem's disgust sometimes harms his play. He stomps his foot with eloquence, gnashes his teeth, gets into foul trouble, storms out of position, distracted by his anger. But when paired off with players of genuine talent, Kareem is at his best, playing the kind of game in which, as he says, "We don't try to hurt each other—we try to hurt each other's feelings." His games against Artis Gilmore, Bob Lanier and Bill Walton can rise to the level of armed ballet. Against Elvin Hayes, he uses all his strength and every ounce of his energy. Against Dan Issel, his nerves grow taut from close struggle. Against Dave Cowens, it's Indian wrestling or a high-scoring cakewalk. Against Tom Burleson, an in-your-face grudge match. No

(Continued on page 26)



Illustrations on photographs by Chuck Hamrick

THE TOP PERFORMERS OF 1977



Steve Cauthen

The railbirds at New York's Belmont Park nicknamed him "The Kid" but bet on him as if he were Old Faithful. By mid-December, Cauthen had won 476 of his 2,035 races in 1977—an incredible feat considering he had sat out a month after suffering a concussion, a fractured arm, a broken rib and two broken fingers in a three-horse spill at Belmont—and had become racing's first \$6 mil-

lion man (in 1977 purses won).

Actually, Cauthen looks more like a bionic boy. He's 17 years old but his choirboy face makes him appear about 12. He stands 5 feet 1 and weighs 95 pounds—some ten pounds lighter than most jockeys. But his large hands, low seat and racing instincts guided him to a record 23 stakes victories in his rookie year.

In his biggest stakes race, the \$200,000 Washington, D.C., International, Cauthen rode a 10-1 shot

named Johnny D. In typical Cauthen fashion, he stayed close to the leader through the first mile, then, with half a mile to go, drove Johnny D. through an opening along the rail, took the lead and won by two and a half lengths.

At age three, Cauthen accompanied his parents to the Kentucky Derby and, while growing up in Lexington, Ky., he seldom thought of any career but riding. "There are still a lot more races to win," he says. "The money isn't important, just the riding."

Pelé

At a salary of \$1.5 million a year, Pelé was the most underpaid athlete in the world when he retired last fall. Before he joined the New York Cosmos in 1975, they averaged 5,000 fans per home game. In 1977, thanks to Pelé's personal magnetism and skills, the Cosmos averaged 45,000. While winning

the North American Soccer League championship, the Cosmos attracted network TV and drew 212,410 for three playoff games in New Jersey.

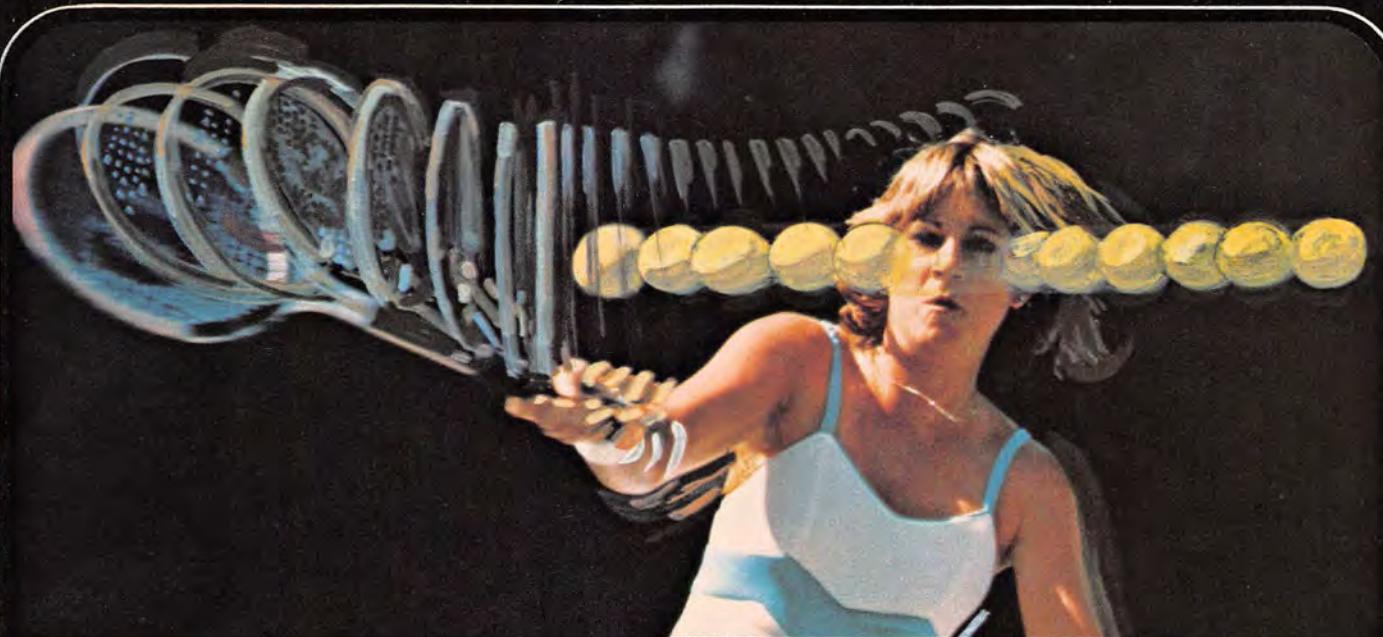
At 36, after starring for 21 years, Pelé showed his instincts were still sharp last season. When he sensed a defender behind him, Pelé often threaded a perfect pass to a cutting teammate. "I never realized a player could be aware of where everyone is on

the field at a given moment," said Cosmo captain Werner Roth.

Cosmo goalie Shep Messing remembered Pelé as a Messiah: "There were 5,000 people at the Tokyo airport. We couldn't get from the plane to the bus. But Pelé, who was crowded the most, stopped to sign autographs. The crowd ended up escorting him to the bus. It was unbelievable."

So was Pelé.





Chris Evert

Although Argentina's Guillermo Vilas won 44 consecutive matches in 1977, even his record couldn't prevent Chris Evert from winning her third consecutive award as SPORT's tennis Performer of the Year.

Through mid-December, Evert had earned \$503,134 in 1977 prize money, the most in the history of women's tennis. In one week she collected \$75,000

for winning the Colgate Championships (defeating Billie Jean King for the fourth time in 1977) and \$100,000 for finishing first in the Colgate bonus pool. But her most satisfying victory of 1977 was defeating King in the Wimbledon quarterfinals. Hitting sharp-angled volleys and overheads and powerful spinning serves that were unusual for the baseline ratter, Evert won 6-1, 6-2, to earn her first career victory over King on grass. Though Evert lost in the Wimbledon semifinals, she won the U.S. Open

and ranked No. 1 in the world, both for the third straight year.

"She may be the best woman tennis player to ever set foot on this earth," said former great John Newcombe.

What's left to accomplish?

"I have to add more variety to my strokes so it won't be so boring to play," said Evert, 23. With few women in the world able to challenge her tennis superiority, Evert's biggest challenge this year may be to maintain her interest in the game.

Guy Lafleur

During the 1976 Stanley Cup playoffs, rumors floated around National Hockey League cities that Montreal right wing Guy Lafleur would be kidnapped—and specially-hired detectives followed him for weeks. Lafleur was not kidnapped, but that might have seemed like a good idea to opponents last year.

As he led the awesome Canadiens to an unprecedented 60-8-12 season and their second straight Cup in 1977, Lafleur won his second straight Art Ross Trophy as the league's top scorer—collecting 56 goals and 80 assists for 136 points, an NHL record for a wing. Then, as Montreal won 12 of 14 playoff games, Lafleur led all scorers with 26 points.

Dazzling the NHL with his play-

making, shooting, forechecking and skating speed, Lafleur also earned the Hart Trophy as the NHL's Most Valuable Player, and both the Conn Smythe Trophy and SPORT Magazine's award as the MVP of the playoffs.

And what does Lafleur have in mind for this year? "Well, I'd like to repeat the same thing if I could," he says, chuckling. "Maybe 140 points or 150. Always I want to get *more*."





Why smoke if you don't enjoy it?

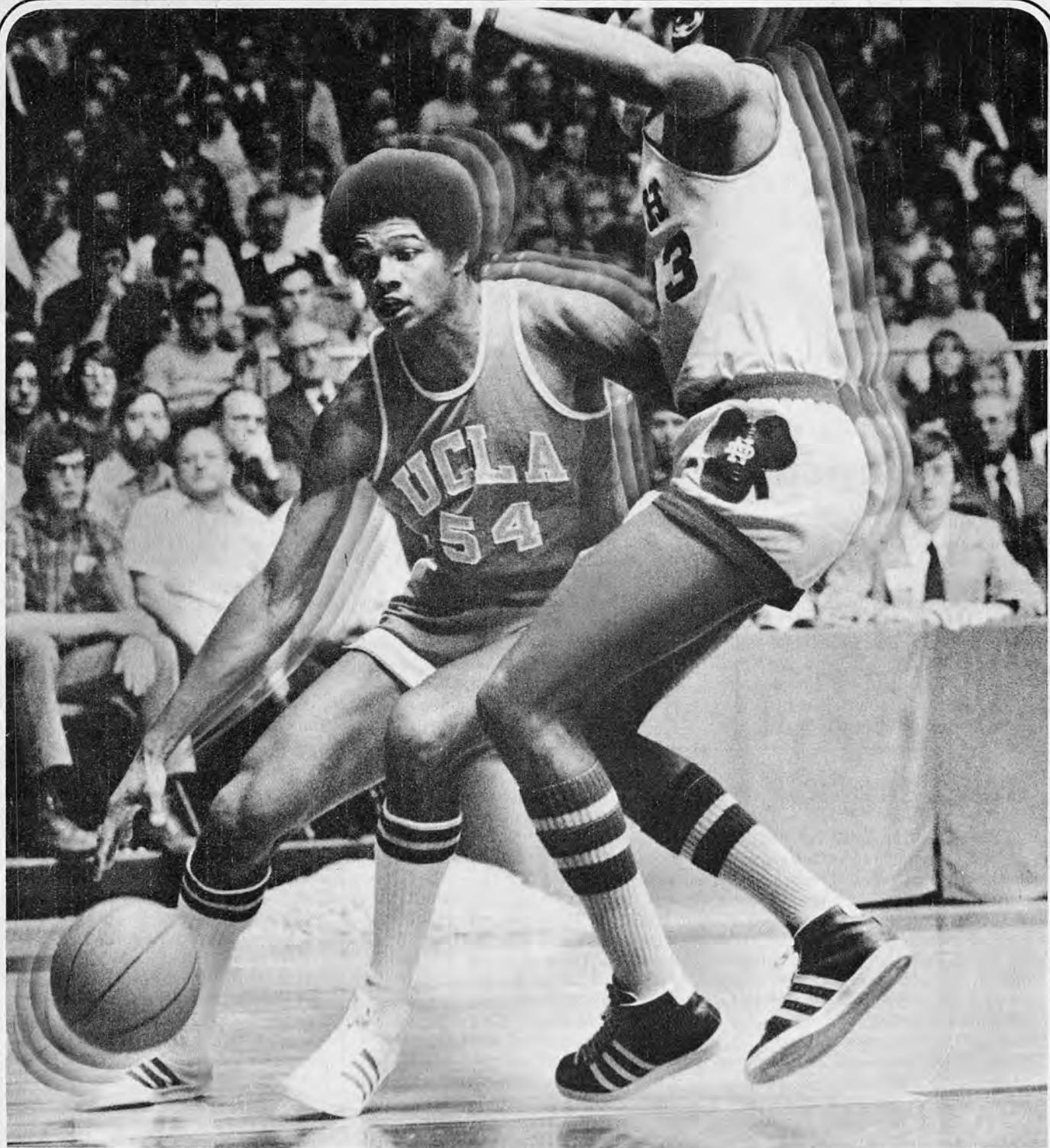


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Marques Johnson

Even Marques Johnson, a 6-foot-6½ forward who moves with the intensity and powerful elegance of a gazelle, couldn't stop Idaho State from winning by one point in the 1977 Western regionals of the NCAA tournament. It was the first time in Johnson's four years at UCLA that his team did not make the final four of the NCAAs.

"I wish I had another shot at it," says Johnson, now a starting forward for the Milwaukee Bucks in the NBA. "I didn't want my college career at UCLA to end

on such a down note."

Yet those who saw his last college game had only praise for Johnson. "We tried to keep him from getting the ball, but he still scored 19 points on us in the first half," says Jim Killingsworth, ex-coach of Idaho State. "They double- and triple-teamed him," says UCLA's ex-coach, Gene Bartow. "He is a super talent."

For the full season, Johnson, a consensus All-America, averaged 21.4 points and 11.1 rebounds a game and contributed even more in key, non-statistic categories. He set picks, started fast breaks with his quick outlet

passes, penetrated defenses with his drives and then fed teammates. All these basics greatly impressed the pros who selected him third in the draft.

"He was the best forward in college," says Bucks vice president Wayne Embry. "He can run, score and jump. He has speed, quickness and the ability to make a team win."

After starting for three seasons, Johnson wound up as the fourth leading scorer and rebounder in UCLA history. The top two in each category were Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton. As a professional, Johnson strives to remain in such select company.



Walter Payton

The Minnesota Vikings couldn't stop him, a touch of flu couldn't stop him, and when the game ended at Soldier Field in Chicago last November 20, Bears running back Walter Payton had 275 yards rushing—an NFL single-game record. Then Minnesota defensive end Carl Eller finally stopped Payton—to shake his hand. For the time being, O.J. Simpson was a man who leaped past old ladies in airports, while

Payton—a muscular 5-10½, 205-pound gamebreaker from tiny Jackson State—was the premier running back in football.

Balance, strength, speed, agility, astounding acceleration, a punishing forearm, a gifted natural athlete—all describe Payton. But above all, Payton, in his third pro season, became the toughest back in the league to bring to a complete stop—because of his ability to spin out of a clogged middle and drag a 240-pound linebacker for a first down.

"It really amazes me," Payton says.

"Some of the things I do, I don't even realize until the game is over and we're reviewing the film." But his fans kept track: An NFC-high 1,390 yards in 1976 and by last Thanksgiving, 5.6 yards a carry for 1,642 yards—compared with O.J.'s season mark of 2,003.

Payton ignores most of the numbers, though—just keeping in mind what his parents told him: Whatever you do, try to be the best. "It's stuck with me all through life," Walter says. "Why reach for the clouds when you can reach for a star? And that's where I am."

Earl Campbell

In 1976, University of Texas running back Earl Campbell spent four games on the bench with a pulled muscle in his right leg, watching opponents snap the Texas wishbone as his team sagged to a mediocre 5-5-1 season. But in 1977, with the wishbone scrapped, his leg healed and his body 20 pounds lighter, senior Campbell picked up where he left off his All-America sophomore year—flying through Southwest Conference defenses like sagebrush in a prairie storm. "I always felt there was going to be a tomorrow," Earl says of 1976, "and I feel right now, it's my tomorrow."

As he led the Longhorns back to national prominence and their first Cotton

Bowl in four years, Campbell rushed for 1,744 yards, 18 touchdowns and a superb yards-per-carry average of 6.5. He finished fifth on the all-time NCAA rushing list with a career total of 4,444 yards—and became the Longhorns' first Heisman Trophy winner.

Unlike the recent college tailbacks who lacked size but won with fancy moves and Olympic speed, Campbell at 6 feet 1 and 220 pounds was a throwback to big, fast fullbacks like Jim Brown. Texas coach Fred Akers also kept an exotic statistic on Campbell in 1977: Yards gained after initial contact. With 1,054 yards earned after the first hit, and much of those dragging defenders, this power runner out of Tyler, Texas should fit smoothly into a pro-style offense. "For years I have tried to com-

pare myself with Chuck Foreman and Franco Harris," Earl says. "I like how Foreman runs over people. And I like Harris' ability to lower his shoulder when somebody is coming and to hit in there when the hole is not there."

Campbell credits his offensive linemen for such top performances last season as his 224 yards against a fine Texas A&M team, 213 more against a Southern Methodist squad keying on him, and 124 tough yards against Oklahoma in their Dallas showdown. But even when his line faltered, Earl could draw on his deep religious faith to keep him going. "Whatever the Good Lord wants me to have, I'm gonna get it. And those which He don't choose for me to have, He knows something better."

And, yes, that includes Tampa Bay.





Rod Carew

Few statistics in sports are as sacred as a .400 batting average. Just two major-leaguers (Ted Williams in 1941 and Bill Terry in 1930) have reached that plateau in the last half-century.

Understandably, then, Minnesota Twins first baseman Rod Carew had baseball fans watching in awe as he peaked at .410, then hovered around .400 early last July. After slipping to the .370s in mid-September, Carew climbed back and finished at .388. Though he failed to reach the top of Everest, he certainly scaled heights that no hitter

had reached in decades.

Carew's .388 was the highest batting average by a major-leaguer in 20 years. His 239 hits in a season were the most in 47 years. And his winning margin of 52 points in the American League batting race was the highest in either league since 1901.

Despite his staggering statistics—which included 100 runs batted in and 128 runs scored—Carew realized he might not be voted the league's Most Valuable Player because his team finished a distant fourth in the AL West.

But he did win his first MVP award, receiving 12 first-place votes and two seconds from the 28-man writers' com-

mittee. Later he said, "I wouldn't have been disappointed if I didn't win, but I think it would have been a farce if I didn't."

Now self-confident and a secure family man, Carew in 1976 signed a three-year, \$600,000 contract with the Twins, though he might have earned much more as a free agent. "Money's not everything to me," he said.

Last season's batting championship was Carew's sixth, which joined him with Williams, Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Rogers Hornsby and Stan Musial as players who've won at least six. Someday Carew will also join them in the Hall of Fame.

Mario Andretti

Though A.J. Foyt won the Indianapolis 500 for an unprecedented fourth time in 1977, SPORT's laurels in auto racing go to Mario Andretti, who mastered the twisting courses of Formula I Grand Prix racing in just his first full year in the circuit. He ranked only third in the drivers' standings behind Niki Lauda and Jody Scheckter, but Andretti became the most feared driver in the world with his brilliant performances in Grand Prix events—the most demanding and competitive of all.

A Grand Prix driver earns points by finishing in the top six in a race, but Andretti scoffs at those who settle for less

than victory: "Trying to play it cagey just to finish is good strategy," he says, "but it really doesn't add to the show. I mean, as far as driving to the limit."

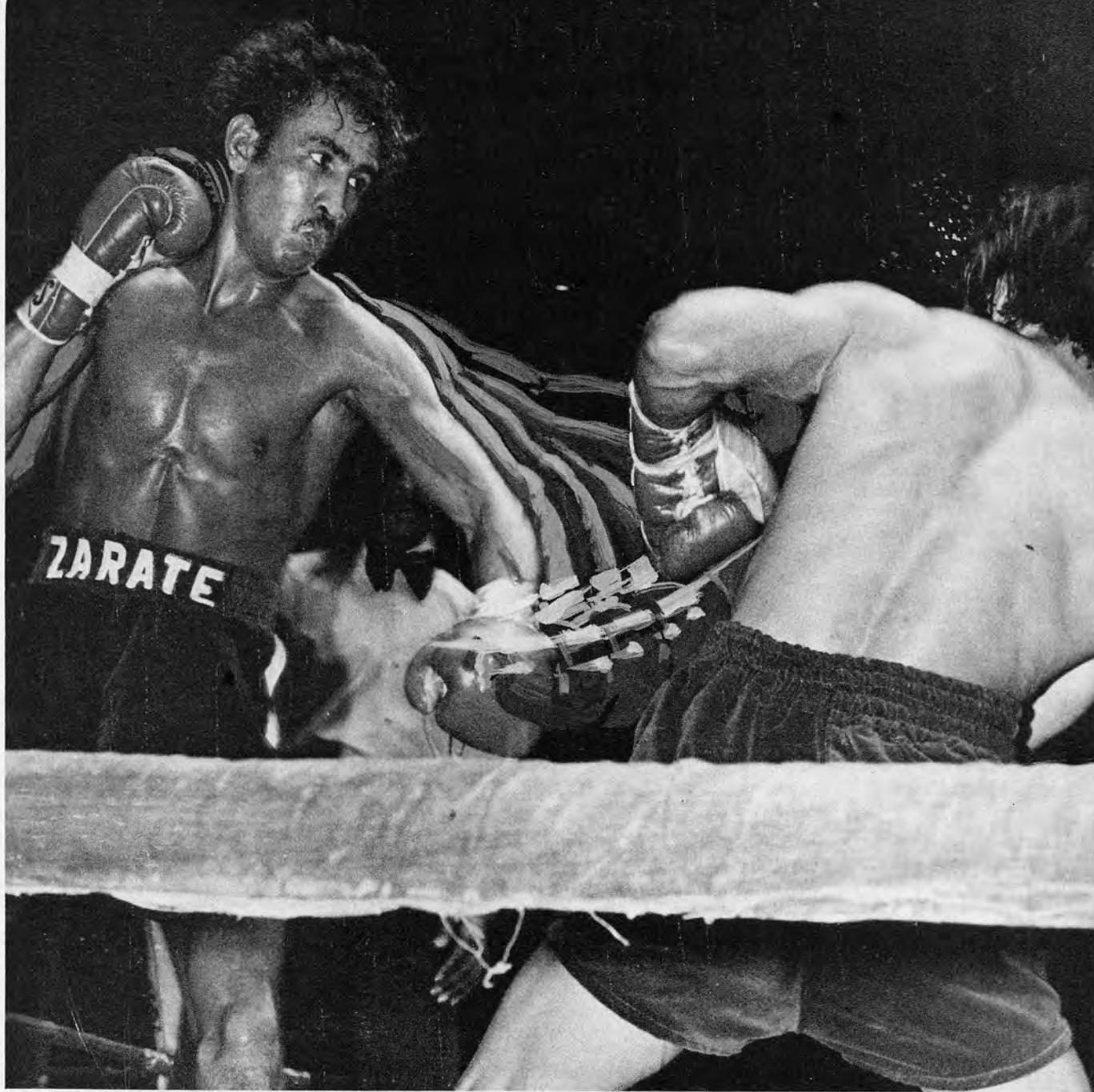
Pushing his JPS Lotus to the limit, but never taking foolish risks, Andretti topped all drivers on the 16-nation circuit with four victories (France, Italy, Spain and Long Beach) and seven pole positions. Only bad luck—including four blown engines in a row—kept Andretti from winning Austria and Canada (he dropped out leading with two laps left), placing third in Holland and Brazil, and taking second in Argentina.

In his most impressive races Andretti, like a seasoned boxer, stayed close and then finished with a last-round flurry. In France, he took the lead from

Briton John Watson in the last lap. At Watkins Glen, Andretti trailed the leader, James Hunt, by 17 seconds with four laps to go and whittled away until finally losing by a mere two seconds. At Long Beach, Andretti passed Scheckter with just two laps left. "It's a game of strength," Andretti explains. "Whenever you've been behind a man for an entire race, the guy becomes uptight, he drops off the pace. Then you can just play tricks on the man. Some take the bait, some don't."

If not, at least the competition respects Andretti's magic. "Mario is on the peak of his form this year," said Scheckter. "Time after time after time, he's driven the car better than most other drivers would."





Carlos Zarate

He boxes in an obscure weight class, speaks no English and has never been seen on home TV in the U.S., but to fight fans in Europe, Latin America, Texas and Southern California, World Boxing Council bantamweight champion Carlos Zarate enjoys the fame of Muhammad Ali.

With 50 victories in 50 pro bouts since 1969—49 by knockout—this devastating 5-foot-8, 118-pound Mexican is

pound for pound the best boxer fighting today. "He's a tall kid—that's what makes him so formidable," says Ali's trainer, Angelo Dundee. "I've seen the guy once, and he looked *ominous*. He uses his height to an advantage, and he's got leverage in all his punches. Each shot he throws at you is a pineapple. I saw him poleaxe a guy in Mexico, just hit him a left uppercut—boom—gone."

Along with that knockout punch—rare in his weight class—Zarate is a polished textbook boxer who pursues, de-

fends and cuts off a ring. He won all four of his 1977 bouts by early knockouts, running his KO string to 35—and those registered off both hands. The most convincing was last April's fourth-round KO of the World Boxing Association bantam champion Alfonso Zamora, the third knockdown in the fight. It was so bad a beating, Zamora's father threw a towel over his son's face as he lay on the canvas.

"Zarate's not just aggressive, he's not just a boxer," says Dundee. "Wherever he fights, there's excitement."

Tom Watson

Tom Watson personally eliminated

his closest competition for Performer of the Year in golf by defeating Jack Nicklaus on the final holes of the British Open and Masters (see story, page 36).

Watson also won the Andy Williams San Diego Open, the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am and the Western Open—earning \$310,653, most on the 1977 tour.



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(continued from page 16)

one in the league gets the best of him twice in a row, and most don't once in a lifetime. Over the course of the season, Kareem beats the competition by an average of six to ten points and four or five rebounds a game.

But for all he has accomplished in his two consecutive MVP seasons playing for the Lakers—playing an average of almost 40 minutes in 173 straight games—nothing compares to his performance in last year's playoffs against Golden State and Portland. In those 11 games, facing teams stronger than the Lakers at nearly every position but his own, he played with a furious concentration that produced moments of mastery rare in any sport. He scored 41, 45, and 43 points in back-to-back games against Golden State, and 40 in the second game against Portland, a memorable one-on-five event which the Blazers won by a single basket. That game sent the Lakers into terminal disarray, and from then on there was no stopping Portland. But Kareem's intensity did not falter, and in the last game he had 30 points and 17 rebounds, writing a wordless essay on the art of basketball.

The Lakers' collapse in four straight games was a group humiliation all hands were free to share in. But it did nothing to diminish Kareem's personal triumph over Bill Walton, the only player in the league ever seriously compared to him. The series was the first sustained encounter between the two great centers of the John Wooden era at UCLA, and after watching it Wooden said, "Walton comes closer to making the most of his abilities than Abdul-Jabbar, but Kareem has more physical talent. Kareem is the outstanding individual in the game today, possibly the best who's ever played." A week after Walton led Portland on to the championship, Kareem was named the league's MVP for the fifth time in his eight seasons of professional basketball. He was without question the dominant performer in all of sports last season.

Still, those who recall Kareem as he was in his days as Lew Alcindor find the enlarged dimensions of his game a much less surprising development than his graceful new embrace of life at large in Los Angeles. Kareem unchained on a basketball court is an old and familiar fantasy. Kareem loose and easy on *Laugh-In* is more like a hallucination. Where once life in Southern California left him feeling "like a man on a raft in the middle of the ocean," he now has an agent in Beverly Hills. Where once, to avoid being seen and spoken to, he practiced such furtive arts as slipping into theaters just as the lights went down, he now appears in fashionable places, ap-

parently having some fun. Cordial, composed, cosmopolitan, he remains a child of Harlem well aware of his roots. But he lives well in Bel Air and has friends who come in different colors than the basic black of the past.

Two years ago, on the day that Jack Kent Cooke, the Lakers' owner, ushered Kareem into the Forum to meet the local sporting press in a ceremony fit for the Shah of Iran, Kareem discounted the notion that he was a changed man—people just had a lot of mistaken ideas about him that he hadn't bothered to correct. A few weeks later, when I met him for the first time, he had a sound and simple explanation for what others took to be an astonishing change of heart: "When I was in L.A. before, I was an adolescent. Now I'm a man. That makes for a whole new way of relating." All the same, his many new enthusiasms led me to wonder if a change greater than he recognized at first might not have come over him since the last time we spoke. So, in midsummer, I called to arrange another meeting and I was told

we ate in welcome silence.

When Kareem pushed his plate away and settled deeper in the soft leather booth, I asked if he agreed with the popular impression that his play was showing new fire and smoke.

"People say that," he said, dipping a teaspoon into a water glass and idly swirling it around. "If it's true, it's because of Jerry [West, the Lakers' coach]." Wasn't he being a bit too self-effacing, giving the coach credit for energies and skills that were obviously his own—the new moves, the long jumpers, the stuff that delighted the crowd? No. He was taking jump shots now because the first coach who'd ever let him take jump shots was Bill Sharman, who led the Lakers before West took over last season. I was aghast at this—Wooden had forbidden jump shots? Kareem narrowed his eyes in close examination of the water-glass whirlpool. "I could horse around with them in practice," he said, "but I couldn't use them in games. The percentage was supposed to be wrong."

But what about the new emotion in his play? Nobody can coach emotion. Didn't it come from within?

"I'm not trying to change my game," Kareem said. "I've pretty well accomplished everything I can as a basketball player. I don't have anything left to prove. Maybe I'm not the best judge of the impression I make, but I've always felt completely involved in playing, and what I've done shows that. But with Jerry, there was something in the atmosphere that became infectious. Everybody wanted to feel about the team the way Jerry did. He was never arrogant. He had great intuition. He wanted to see what each of us could do. When you get that kind of atmosphere going, it does something to bring you near the top of your skills. Maybe something like that happened with me."

Kareem seemed to have warmed to the conversation, but at the first opportunity he turned it away from basketball; talking basketball had always bored him, he told me on our first meeting, because as long as he expressed himself adequately playing it, there wouldn't be much left to say. So we talked about this and that while Kareem stirred his water and people passing through the restaurant snapped admiring glances his way. At length, I asked if he'd heard that the jury had just gone out in the trial of the 12 Hanafis. Kareem shook his head in heavy sorrow.

Kareem himself was a follower of the Hanafi Muslim faith, and indeed he shared the grievances that had prompted the 12 to act last March when they briefly seized three buildings in Washington and took 134 persons hos-

Wooden: "Kareem is the outstanding individual in the game today"

he could fit me in between a trip to Hawaii and a celebrity baseball game at Dodger Stadium, where, as it turned out, he beat out an infield single and stole second standing up.

Kareem was not amused when I asked him which particular Lakers had gone into the Lakerburgers. We had met for lunch at the Forum Club and Kareem had lapsed into a mood so distant that I thought perhaps a little humor might possibly—but why explain?—Kareem was not amused. How's your summer going? I asked. Fine, he said, gazing across the restaurant with empty eyes, like a man out on a raft.

Further interrogation drew from him reports that he was running four miles daily, swimming as much as he could, feeling strong and healthy, endorsing basketballs and basketball shoes, trading in Oriental rugs and other antiquities, fiddling around with some autobiographical writing, failing to study Arabic as planned and pursuing business offers. The substance of these disclosures came in a tone of such hard-edged civility that I began to wonder if the new Kareem had once again transformed himself and become the Kareem of old. When the Lakerburgers arrived,

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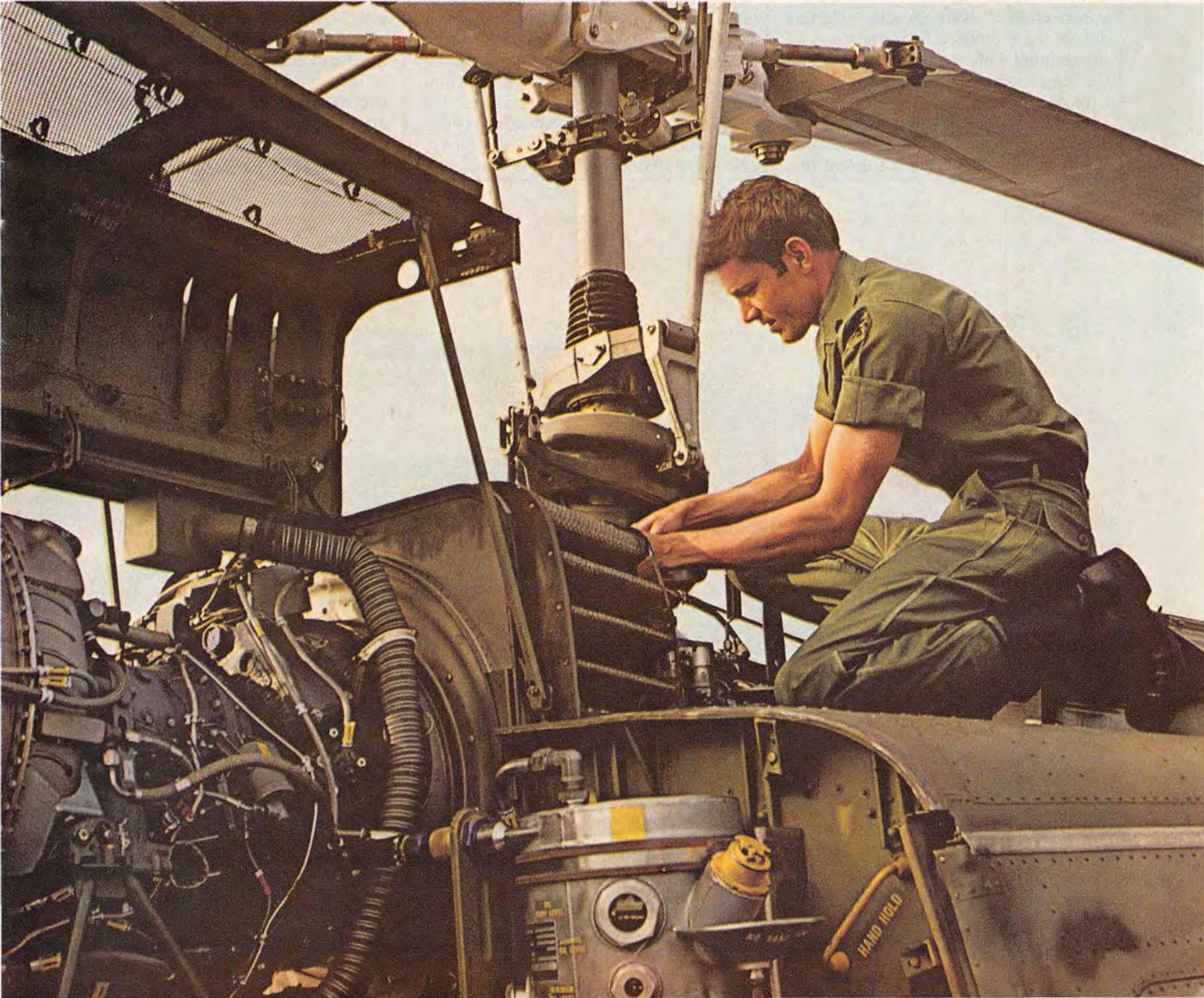
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tage. A stray bullet fired by one of the Hanafis had killed a man, and now all 12 were facing a variety of kidnapping and murder charges. The first of their grievances was the lenient justice they felt had been accorded to four Black Muslims who were serving prison terms for the mass murder of seven Hanafis at a house in Washington in January of 1973, a house that Kareem had bought and given to the sect for use as a community center; Kareem had served as a pall-bearer at their funeral, and for several weeks that season, he had traveled around the league and appeared at games under police escort. The second grievance was the showing of the movie, *Mohammed, Messenger of God*.

The Hanafis' outrage over the movie confused me—how could a movie, an intensely reverent movie approved by other Muslim orders, have inspired them to engage in such a reckless act?

"No, no, the movie is completely unacceptable," Kareem said. "Certain details were omitted from the story of the Prophet's life to suit the interests of the filmmakers. It's a completely unacceptable movie."

Kareem's intensity grew as he talked. The spoon circled around in the glass as if driven by gears. When I asked him

what he felt should have been done to the Black Muslim killers, he gave a ringing brief in favor of capital punishment.

"The worst problem in this culture," he said, "is the complete lack of decisiveness on the great issues. Nobody can make up his mind about capital punishment, wars, abortions, all the life-and-death issues. And the culture lacks the conviction to help anybody make up his mind. There's just a complete failure of moral courage on all the questions that count. People say that punishments are cruel in the Moslem world. Maybe so, but at least they're clear and direct. To me, indecisiveness and uneven justice are the worst punishments there are. They punish the whole culture."

But if he believed in direct, unswerving justice, I asked, how would he deal with the 12 Hanafis? How could taking hostages and causing a man's death ever be excused if the law was going to be the law? Kareem thought for a while, swirling his teaspoon until drops of water were skipping over the rim of the glass. Then he tossed the spoon down on the table and looked over at me, for the first time, it seemed, in many minutes. He said he was acquainted with Abdul Khaalis, who had led the Hanafi raiders. He knew that Abdul Khaalis was a man

of strong faith and in no sense any kind of criminal.

"I hope the jury will be able to recognize the kind of man he is," he said, "that this act was a spontaneous expression of deep inner feelings, a response to a terrible injustice. It wasn't based on anything criminal."

He heaved a sigh, snatched up the teaspoon, and went back to his stirring. "There's so much confusion about what we really believe," he said. "I guess a person like Abdul Khaalis just won't be understood."

We talked on in a darkening vein until suddenly Kareem remembered that he had other business to tend to: He was due at Dodger Stadium right away. He said a solemn goodbye, then hurried out the door, dipping his head to clear the transom. As I watched him go, the idea that a super new attitude was something to be wished for in this man receded from mind faster than his departing figure. I had come to quiz him about jump shots and joke about Lakerburgers, hoping to find him affable, outgoing, full of chatter about his new interests and friends, and it embarrassed me to recall my disappointment with how subdued he was in his responses to what must have seemed a trivial burden on the day

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the jury went out. Yet now he was on his way to take celebrity batting practice. Driving fast to Dodger Stadium, he would search the radio for news of the trial. Down at the batting cage, his thoughts would drift to the jury room. Greeting the Dodgers, he would grieve for the Hanafis. And unless he could manage to laugh at jokes about the incredible size of his strike zone and demonstrate that the new Kareem was an all-round marketable jock, the Dodgers might well conclude that the real Kareem was the old one, aloof, sullen, withdrawn. The world's greatest basketball player happened to be a man of profound concerns, and sometimes they lent an incongruous camouflage to the success and healthy pleasures of his life.

The boys on the Laker bus were in high good humor when they set out on the first road trip of the new season, a two-hour run up to Bakersfield, Calif. for an exhibition game with Phoenix. Half the players were new to the team, but a week of training camp had established between them a tentative palship that seemed to include everyone except the new guard, Ernie DiGregorio, the only man to bring his own pillow along for the ride. Whites sat with whites,

blacks with blacks. Laughter crackled up and down the aisle. A well-thumbed copy of *Hustler* was tossed from seat to seat. Kareem was near the back, talking with Jamaal Wilkes, the Lakers' newly-acquired silky smooth forward, and, as it happened, a fellow Hanafi.

A few miles out of town, Kareem came up the aisle to be interviewed by Ted Green of the *Los Angeles Times*. Kareem fit himself into a window seat with the ease of an accomplished contortionist and turned a placid face Green's way, ready to be questioned. First off, Green wanted to know if Kareem had not violated his own strict rule against tall-guy jokes when he appeared on *Laugh-In* and cheerfully engaged in the following dialogue:

FIVE-FOOT-TALL BLOND GIRL: Come on, say it just once.

KAREEM: Aw, okay. Fee, fi, fo, fum.

"I didn't think that was demeaning at all," Kareem said earnestly. "Contrary to what a lot of people think, I don't have hangups about my height. The thing is, people have made unkind, cruel jokes all my life. I've heard them all and they're not funny. But I'm proud of my height and pleased by it, and it didn't do any harm to do that line for fun."

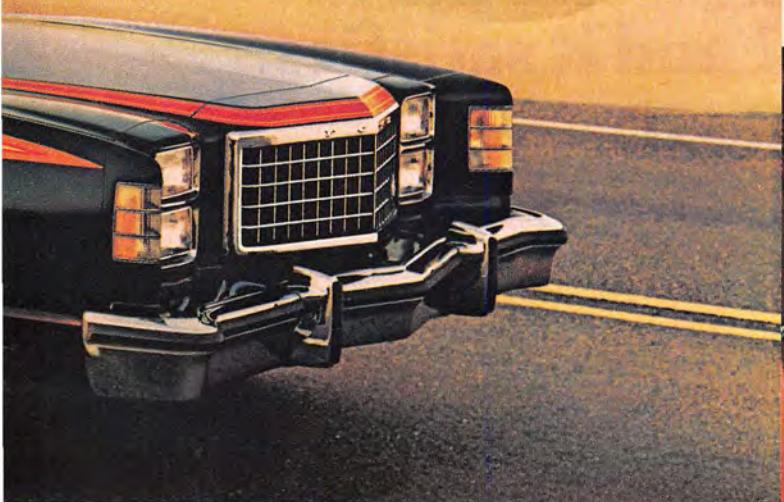
As the bus traversed the barren miles,

Kareem rambled on about his growing interest in broadcast journalism. His television appearances so far had just been "lightweight shots," he said, but he'd done them in order to explore possibilities for the future. "Look at O.J.—we're the same age, and O.J. doesn't have to play ball anymore if he doesn't want to. He's made it in the media. I don't see myself running through airports like he does. But as long as it's dignified and doesn't involve stereotypes, sure, why not, I'm interested."

A few hours later, when the Lakers strolled into the Bakersfield arena for their warmup, Jerry West took a seat a few rows up in the stands and looked on with satisfaction. With Wilkes, five fine rookies and Lou Hudson joining the team in two days, the Lakers were far stronger than the year before, when by some mysterious chemistry they wound up with the league's best record.

"Kareem did so much more than anyone can expect of any player last season," West said. "We just had no business going as far as we did, and Kareem's got to be the explanation. It's a fantastic tribute to his qualities as a man that he could carry a team the way he carried ours. When a great player plays that hard, things happen that just

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go beyond the limits of the game."

Down on the floor, Kareem was horsing around under the basket, catching dozens of balls and slinging them every which way to whoever didn't seem to be looking. "Look at him," West said a little wistfully. "He's having fun.

"I guess Kareem fascinates me partly because I never could figure him out before. We played against each other for five seasons, but he was such a private person, he never said anything to anybody. I used to wonder what he was all about. Now, since I've gotten to know him, I think of Kareem as very gregarious, a good talker, a guy with a million interests. He's so well read it's amazing. On the planes, everybody else will be sleeping or listening to music, and there's Kareem with the financial page of the *New York Times*. And when you get into conversations with him, he says things that have some meaning. It's not just banter with Kareem.

"It's no surprise that he's branching out now. He's more animated than he used to be, and he's willing to do things he wouldn't do in the past. He just keeps on developing as a person, and it shows in his play, too. He's a more complete offensive player now than he was a few seasons ago, and even then, of course he was everybody's MVP. You'd be surprised how much satisfaction I get out of seeing him open up like he's doing. It's nice that people are getting to know him. I think he's the kind of man who's going to go on to lead a fantastic life after he's through playing."

Then it was time for the National Anthem, the handshake, the tip-off, the first shot, the first shove—Kareem's ninth season was beginning. He played with obvious pleasure at cruising speed, and when the Lakers lost the game in the last minute, it did not disturb his mood. He walked out of the arena laughing at somebody's joke, and on the bus ride back to Los Angeles, Kareem had the whole team laughing at a little raunchy humor.

Halfway home, when most of the players were sleeping, Kareem came up the aisle to talk. This time, it wasn't the substance of his words that counted. It was the tone. He was more at ease than I'd ever seen him, with no more on his mind than a story he'd been reading, a friend we had in common, the good times it looked like he'd be having this year. It was pleasant to pass the time with him, and later on it seemed just as well that I'd neglected to say how bad I felt for him when I saw in the papers a few weeks before that Abdul Khaalis had been sentenced to 123 years in prison. The jury hadn't understood.

A lesser man might have planned his

morning the other way around—first get the haircut, then meet the press. But looking good on TV was not among Kareem's concerns on this hot November morning in Los Angeles. He had a message to deliver that contained some troubling thoughts, and it was only after he'd spent a long hour being photographed, filmed and questioned by a dozen reporters that he folded himself into his white Mercedes and headed across town to the Magnificent Brothers Tonsorial Parlor, where a barber stood waiting to give the legend a trim.

Kareem looked priestly under the silky black chair cloth that the barber swept over his shoulders and fastened high on his neck. Before setting to work, the barber contemplated him as a project, a problem of his art: Bold beard, wispy mustache, hairline holding steady, a little thin on top. Kareem gazed around the room impassively and was gazed at in return by many of the 30 or so persons in this lively, musical barbershop. Boys peeked in from the doorway. Men waiting for haircuts stole

West: "Kareem did so much more than anyone can expect of any player"

glances over their magazines without sacrificing their cool. A woman drew a chair up to Kareem's and sat at manicurist range, her chin an inch from his knee. An older man in the next chair was having his hair done the old-fashioned way—fried, dyed, laid to the side—but like all the others he was well aware that Kareem was not only a sports hero and a remarkable sight to behold up close, but also an important apostle of black culture, someone the whole community admired. Respectful of his presence, fascinated even, everyone knew well enough to leave the man in peace. By no means did anyone mention his angry night in Milwaukee, or the unhappy fact that with the season already in its second month Kareem's stats were:

Minutes played: 2

Rebounds: 1

Personal fouls: 1 (fighting)

Kareem had called in the press that morning to protest the injustice of the league's decision to fine him \$5,000 for slugging Kent Benson, Milwaukee's rookie center, who had brought the trouble on by delivering a vicious elbow to Kareem's midsection and, except for the Laker center's righteous roundhouse in retaliation, had gone com-

pletely unrebuked. The violence was simply out of control in pro basketball, and it made Kareem gloomy concerning the future of his sport.

The punch had broken a bone in Kareem's right hand, and he'd taken some heavy knocks in the press for losing his temper. Benson hadn't seen the blow coming, and, in falling, had suffered a mild concussion. "I know how tall he is, but I thought Kareem was a bigger man," one local columnist wrote.

But the press conference worked to restore Kareem's confidence that his message was getting across. "I think everybody there understood that fighting just isn't what I'm about," he said afterward. "Everybody in the league thinks I've got a short temper now, so that's the line of attack. Nothing else works to stop me, so they rely on that. And when they don't even penalize the violence that brings this kind of thing on, well, it just encourages it."

The barber's deft scissors turned Kareem's natural into a flawless sphere, and after saying his farewells, Kareem strolled out to the parking lot, remarking on what a classic institution of black culture is the barbershop.

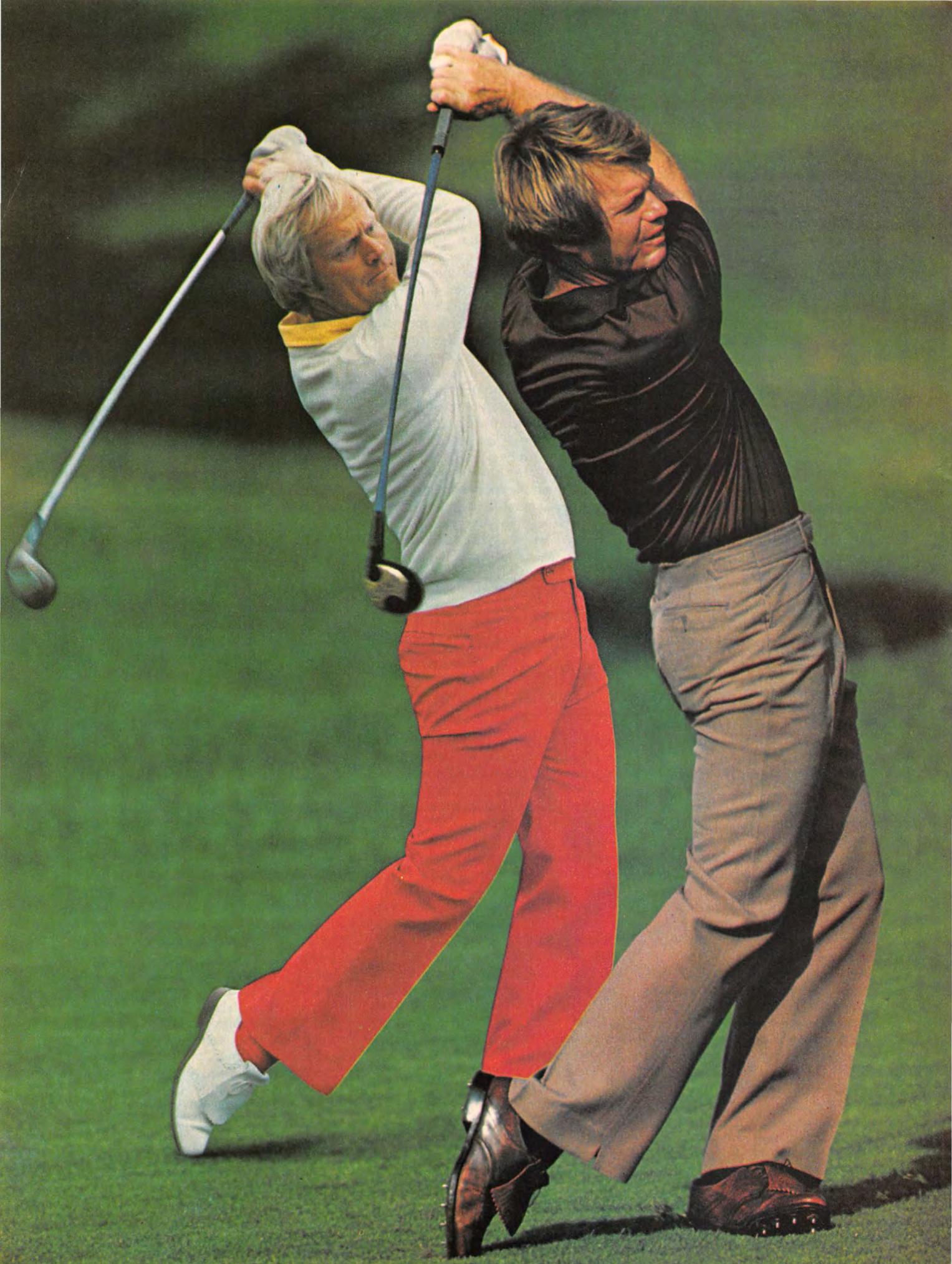
Kareem eased down on the fender of his car for a few more words before returning to his private world, to the house where few people are invited, the close inner circle no one asks about or sees. He looked calm and confident, but he said that he felt like a caged lion, that skipping rope and running didn't help to release the energy he had ready for basketball. He was too agitated to do any writing, to pursue his interests, to make much of his unwelcome spare time.

I asked Kareem if he thought there was anything he could do to contain himself—maybe his hot temper wasn't just a reaction to rough and dirty play but also a necessary aspect of becoming more open to life.

"There might be something to that," he said. "But what am I supposed to do? I really think most people would be provoked in the same way I am. You can't just keep absorbing the punishment."

Kareem had what looked like a problem with no solution. If the cache of feelings he had opened up allowed him to be the absorbing, pleasurable person the world was discovering, how could he close it up to stifle this threat to his life as a player? There was no returning now to the raft in the middle of the ocean.

"Sure, it's a problem. I know it's a weakness I've got," he said. "I guess what I'm mainly doing now is working on it, trying to figure it out and control it. I'll have to walk a thin line. I'll have to think about the consequences. I'm not on the streets of Harlem anymore." ■



King Nicklaus and the great pretender

During his 16-year reign as the world's premier golfer, Jack Nicklaus has fought off every challenger bent on usurping his crown. But now his concentration is suspect, and the prince who would be king is Tom Watson

by DAVE ANDERSON

Jack Nicklaus usually keeps his emotions under his blond hair. He wins graciously and he loses graciously. Whether he shoots 66 or 76, he's the same man—at least publicly. But once he wasn't. More than an hour after he finished fourth to Gary Player in the 1974 Masters, the world's premier golfer was still seething inside. He was standing outside the interview room at the Augusta National Golf Club, glancing up at a television screen that showed the little South African putting out on the final green.

As Nicklaus talked about how his 6-iron tee shot on the 16th hole had landed in a sand trap, costing him a bogey, his neck reddened. "Instead of getting better on the last few holes, I got worse," he snapped. "That's not like me. That's stupid. That's the thing that some of those other guys do."

Jack Nicklaus seldom puts down other golfers on the tour. But in that flash of ego, he had put down "some of those other guys" who always seem to find a way to lose a major tournament on the final holes.

Then last year he found a way to lose three major tournaments on the final holes—the Masters and the British Open to Tom Watson, the PGA to Lanny Wadkins (who won after a playoff with Gene Littler). Each time Nicklaus lost graciously. "I gave you my best shot," he said to Watson as they shook hands on the final green of the British Open last July at Turnberry.

Nicklaus (left) holds the record for major tournament wins, 16, but lost the '77 Masters and British Open to Watson.

"but you beat it."

But the two losses to Watson stayed with him. Wherever he went, he was asked if Watson, who at 28 is ten years younger, was dethroning him.

Nicklaus handled those questions smoothly. "They've been writing that about somebody for five or six years," he invariably said. "I hope they write it for another five or six years." And he smiled. He always smiled. But inside he had to be seething. Not at the question, not at Watson, but seething at himself. When a golfer loses a tournament on the final holes, any tournament, he can't blame anybody else. To many, that's the beauty of golf. The "only-ness of it," as Hale Irwin once said. It's also the terror of golf. What you shoot is what you get.

But there was no evidence of Nicklaus seething until his company, Golden Bear Enterprises, issued a two-page news release last October. And between the lines, the seething was apparent.

Nicklaus, the release announced, was restructuring his 1978 schedule "in order to prepare himself better for golf's major championships." He has 16 major titles—five Masters, three U.S. Opens, two British Opens, four PGA's, two U.S. Amateurs—and that's more than any golfer in history. Bobby Jones had 13. But for Nicklaus, it's obvious that 16 are not enough.

"I feel I'm at the peak of my career," he said in the release. "I know that whatever my record is, it will be broken one day but I think it would be a shame not to take full advantage of my opportunity to keep on adding to it for as long as I can. I feel that's good for the

game of golf."

And good for Jack Nicklaus, of course. His ego again had flashed publicly. As it should occasionally. With champions, ego isn't a flaw, it's an attribute. It's what makes Jack Nicklaus the world's premier golfer, just as it's what made New York Yankee Reggie Jackson hit three home runs in the final World Series game. And ego has motivated Nicklaus to reestablish his reign when it is threatened, as it is now by Tom Watson's two majors last year.

Twice before in Nicklaus' career another golfer won two majors in one year—Lee Trevino in 1971, Gary Player in 1974. Each time Nicklaus responded to the challenge by winning two majors the next year. Take that, pretenders to the throne. But at 38, he might not respond again so successfully. His concentration is distracted now by several factors: His own Memorial Tournament, by his travels as a golf architect, by his commitment to his wife Barbara and their five children, and by his knowledge that his stature is secure. If he doesn't win any more major tournaments, he still will hold the record for many years, perhaps for decades.

But there's another reason why Jack Nicklaus might not respond to the challenge, perhaps the most important reason: Tom Watson.

The challenger is not distracted. "Not that golf is my life," he says. "My wife Linda is. But playing golf is my profession." That was apparent after he accepted the winner's trophy at the British Open postmatch ceremonies. Watson rode with Linda in a navy blue Rolls-Royce that had been commandeered for the short trip to the nearby Turnberry Hotel. Once in their room, the Watsons looked out at the golden glow of sunset along Scotland's western coast while bagpipes played below.

"I'm not going to forget this moment," Linda said. "Not ever."

"Linda," her husband said softly. "I'm already coming down."

Linda understood. She remembered when Tom had earned nearly \$75,000 without winning a tournament in 1973, his second year on the tour, and she had mentioned that if he made that much every year, he would be a success.

"Don't ever say that again because that's not the point," Tom told her. "I'd rather win a tournament and make less money than not win and make more money."

That sounds like something Nicklaus would have said in his early years on the tour. And that's not surprising. Nicklaus and Watson are quite similar in temperament, in manner, in competitive intensity, in family background. Each grew up in a midwestern country

Nicklaus vs. Watson

club atmosphere—Nicklaus, the son of a prosperous Columbus, Ohio druggist; Watson, the son of a prosperous Kansas City, Mo. insurance executive.

"Jack likes to be paired with Tom," Jack Nicklaus' wife Barbara once told Linda Watson. "Their personalities blend."

And just as Nicklaus idolized Bobby Jones during his formative years, Watson idolized Arnold Palmer. "I played an exhibition with Arnold when I was 14," Watson says with a smile. "I was terrified."

In those years Watson was rooting for Palmer to fight off the challenge of Nicklaus; now many people in golf are root-

Gary Player and Billy Casper, then Lee Trevino, then Tom Weiskopf, then Johnny Miller, then Ben Crenshaw, then Jerry Pate and last year Tom Watson—the psychology major with the tight smile, the Kansas City Kid with the reddish-brown hair and the freckles.

"And," says Nicklaus, "it'll be somebody else next year."

Not that it couldn't be Watson again but Nicklaus has seen so many challengers appear and disappear that he can be excused for thinking that Watson will be like the others. Or perhaps he's hoping that Watson will be like the others, that Watson, too, will disappear.

"Watson's a very good player," Nicklaus says, "but Miller still is the most talented golfer out here. But outside of winning the British Open in 1976, he hasn't done anything for three years. Weiskopf and Miller—I can't match either of those guys for talent."

Nicklaus isn't putting down Watson so much as he's saying that he's had challengers before. "Watson's no different," he continues. "He's just another guy I got to beat. He's very strong, a very good player. But there are a lot of courses he can't play. He doesn't have the shots yet, the shots around the green. And in both the Masters and the British Open, there was no wind. But his mental attitude may set him apart from everybody else. He's the strongest thinker of the lot. He's got a positive manner. It's like he's got blinders on. He knows where he's going."

That last phrase sounds familiar. When Watson won the \$50,000 first prize in the 1975 World Series of Golf after qualifying with his first British Open title, Nicklaus was impressed. "Tom," he said then, "knows exactly where he's going—straight ahead. Nothing distracts him. He has great abilities, super confidence and just enough cockiness. He's not a comer, he's arrived."

Watson has really arrived now and presumably is still approaching his peak. The older Nicklaus is possibly past his peak. But he's not surrendering to age. Only once before, in 1968 and 1969, did Nicklaus go two years without winning a major title. To him, those are two wasted years. "What annoys me," he says, "is that I'm playing better golf than I've ever been. I'm a better player. I know how to prepare better."

Tom Watson was hitting 3-wood shots on the Westchester Classic practice tee last year. One after the other, the balls soared out toward his caddy, who seldom had to stray more than a few steps to either side. Perspiration soon appeared across the midsection and high on the left sleeve of Watson's

brown shirt.

"Why," an onlooker wondered, "is there sweat on his sleeve like that?"

"That sleeve," somebody explained, "hits his chin on his backswing."

Perspiration literally was dripping off Watson's chin. It would continue to drip as he hit about 500 shots that day with his 3-wood, his pitching wedge and his sand wedge. At the time he was intent on maintaining his position as the tour's leading money-winner. Nicklaus, who has won more than \$3 million in his pro career, had been the leader eight times, including five of the previous six years, missing only when he finished second in 1974 to Johnny Miller's record \$345,021 total. Watson finished first in '77 with \$310,653, and that figure did not include his earnings in the British Open and other foreign events. Nicklaus was last year's runnerup with \$284,509.

"I've had a big year," Watson had said before he practiced that day at Westchester, "but I can't be compared to Jack Nicklaus, not over our careers. I've had one year, he's had 16 years. Over our careers, there's no question that he's the best. I've still got ten years to prove I belong with him."

But last year he proved that he belonged with Nicklaus in the Masters and the British Open. He also proved that he handled the pressure better. Not that the pressure was quite the same. Who is to say which is more smothering—the pressure of knowing, as Jack Nicklaus did, that you're expected to play better than Tom Watson over the final holes; or the pressure of knowing, as Tom Watson did, that you must play better than Jack Nicklaus over the final holes?

In the Masters' finish, Watson had the additional pressure of being known as a "choker."

Watson did not deserve the label. He had won the 1975 British Open at Carnoustie by one stroke in an 18-hole playoff with Jack Newton after making an 18-foot putt to tie the Australian on the final green the day before. Earlier last year he had won the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am and the Andy Williams San Diego Open in successive weeks. But the cynics preferred to emphasize the tournaments he had lost. They remembered how he soared to a 79 in the final round of the 1974 U.S. Open at Winged Foot after having been the 54-hole leader. They recalled his brief opportunity to win the 1975 U.S. Open at Medinah where a heckler yelled, "Remember Winged Foot, kid." Cynics also talked of how he had lost the lead in the final round of both the Tournament Players Championship and the Heritage Classic in the weeks before the Masters began.

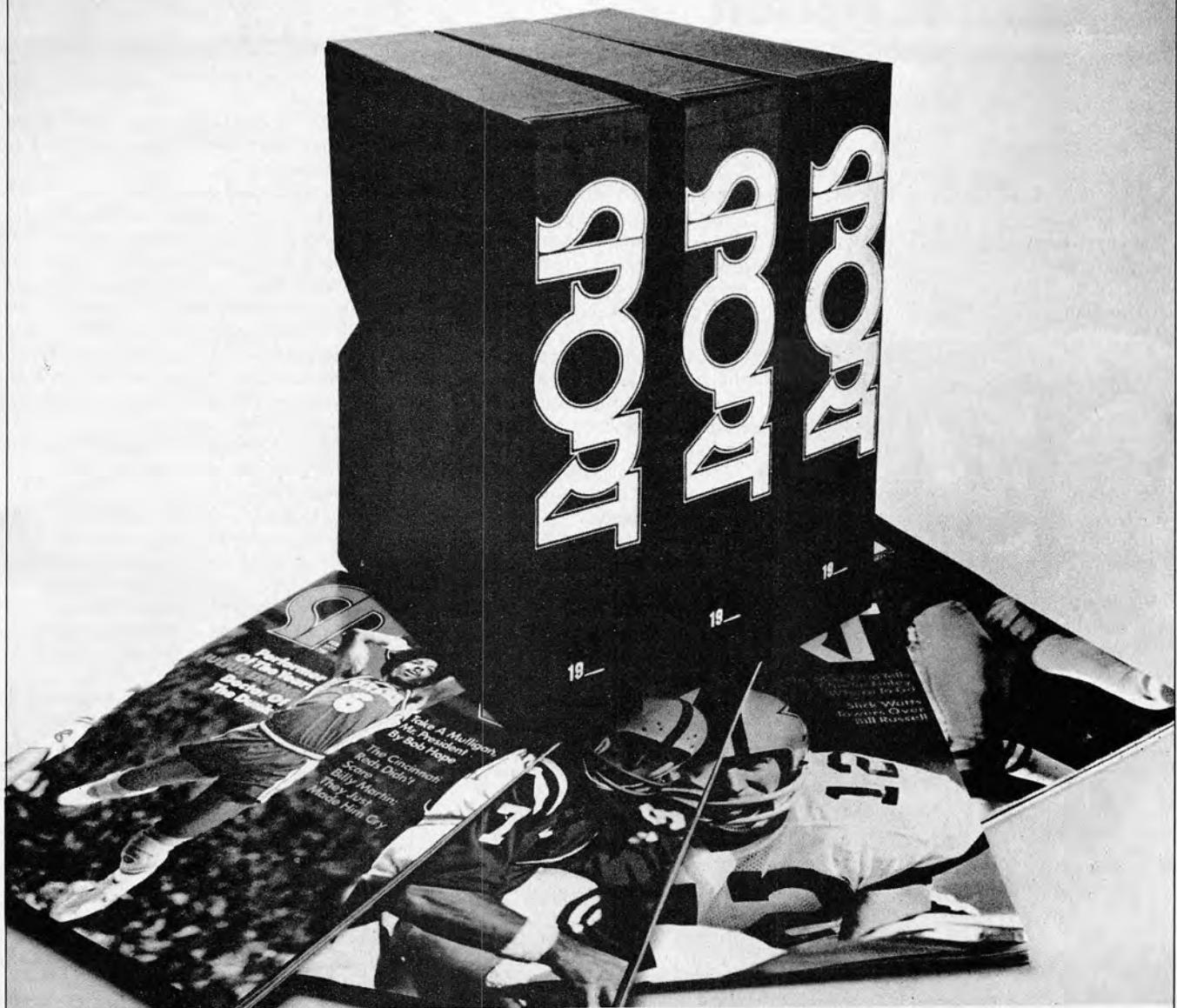
"That talk hurt him," Linda Watson



After winning the '76 Tournament Players, Nicklaus posed with his wife Barbara and PGA commissioner Dean Beman.

ing for Nicklaus to fight off Watson's challenge. But the difference between Nicklaus and Watson as young touring pros is that Nicklaus arrived a proven winner with two U.S. Amateur championships and many other prominent amateur titles. Watson had been merely a good college golfer at Stanford. "Tom's had to learn how to win on the tour," Nicklaus says. "That's not easy."

In Nicklaus' first years as a pro, not many people in golf wanted to believe that Jack Nicklaus was better than Arnold Palmer, but he was. But in his reign, he has had a series of challengers:



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Nicklaus vs. Watson

says. "He never talked to me about it, but I know it hurt him. Deep down he knew he was not a choker."

But in his honest manner, Watson can sound as though he is not a pressure player. When he led the Masters after 36 holes a newsman asked him, "Who are you most afraid of in the last two rounds?"

"Myself," Watson replied with his tight smile.



Tom, the '77 top money winner, says his wife Linda (with him above) is "my life. But playing golf is my profession."

More than anybody else, every golfer is afraid of himself, afraid his swing will betray him. But when Watson said "myself," some took it to mean that he has no self-confidence, that he deserves the choke label.

But last April at Augusta in the Masters' final round, Watson tore off that label.

Tied with Nicklaus, who was in the twosome ahead, with two holes remaining, Watson curled a 20-foot putt into the cup for a birdie 3 on the 17th green. Suddenly he was the leader. And the roar from the gallery surrounding the 17th green thundered through the Georgia pines to where Nicklaus was standing on the 18th fairway.

"I had myself programmed," Nicklaus says now, "to hit a 6-iron past the cup and play for a par, hoping that Watson would make a mistake. That's how

you win. But when I heard the roar for his birdie, I couldn't play safe."

Nicklaus thought about hitting a 7-iron but didn't believe he could get the ball to the hole with that club. He decided to hit a "light 6-iron," but he hit it "fat," as golfers say. His ball sailed into the deep sand trap to the left of the green. He took a bogey 5, then Watson finished with a routine par.

In the clutch, Nicklaus hit a bad shot from the final fairway. If Watson had hit the same shot under those circumstances, he would have been accused of choking under pressure. But nobody would dare accuse Nicklaus of having choked.

And in the crisis of their British Open duel, it was Nicklaus who hit the bad shot, not Watson.

As at the Masters, they were tied with two holes remaining. On the 17th at Turnberry, a par 5 of 500 yards downwind, Nicklaus outdrove Watson, as he often did. Each knew that he had to be on the green with his next shot in order to virtually assure a birdie. Watson drilled a 3-iron to within 20 feet—eagle range. But then Nicklaus hit a 4-iron into the light rough to the right of the green. "It wasn't," Nicklaus says now, "that far off-line."

But it was enough off-line to produce a par while Watson got down in two putts for his birdie and a one-shot lead he would maintain through the final hole. Nicklaus did not lose without a struggle. He saved par on the 18th with a 35-foot putt that forced Watson to make his three-foot birdie putt.

"Choking," says Watson, "is mental—not being able to concentrate. You get negative thoughts. Or the gallery is bothering you. Or you're still thinking about your previous shot."

"Choking," says Nicklaus, "is when you can't control your emotions. We all choke a bit. Emotions sometimes help you win but sometimes you can't control them and you lose."

Tom Watson is only the 12th golfer to win two major titles in the same year. Jack Nicklaus has done it four times, Ben Hogan three, Bobby Jones, Arnold Palmer and Gene Sarazen each did it twice. Walter Hagen, Sam Snead, Gary Player, Lee Trevino, Craig Wood and Jack Burke Jr. were the others. But only three were younger than Watson was last year. Sarazen was 20, Nicklaus 23, Jones 24.

"Nicklaus and Hogan, they manage the courses so well, they don't let the courses manage them," Watson said at the Westchester Classic last year. "That's what I'm learning, to manage the course. I don't use my driver off the tee all the time now. I don't go for the

pin all the time. That's why I had a good year."

He walked off toward the putting green where he would practice for half an hour.

"Two majors in one year," Linda Watson said as she watched her husband practice. "I never realized what that meant until Tom told me that Gene Littler has won only one major, that Hale Irwin has won only one major, that Tom Weiskopf has won only one major. And now my Tom has three. But he wants more. He wants his trophies. When you look at Tom, you know he wants to win."

Jack Nicklaus still wants to win too. And he's not too old to keep playing top-level golf.

Hogan and Player each won two major titles when they were 39, Craig Wood did it when he was 40 and Hogan won three majors in 1953 when he was 41 years old. "I came this close last year," Nicklaus says putting his thumb and index finger almost together, "to having the best year I've ever had."

Two bad shots cost him the Masters and the British Open but a bad bounce cost him the PGA when, in the final round at Pebble Beach, his tee shot on the 210-yard 17th hole, apparently on line to the flag, veered to the right off a small mound in front of the green. Instead of a possible birdie 2, he got a bogey 4. But he doesn't complain. "Golf was never meant to be a fair game," he says. "I've had enough good bounces. I've got to take the bad bounces, too."

He's also had enough good years and he'll have to take the bad. But he doesn't believe those bad years have begun yet. "My time will come, I've got to accept that for what it is," he says. "But my short game now is better than ever. It has to be. I used to look at a bunker 260 yards away and hit the ball over it. Now I aim to avoid it. That's life. I just hope that when I'm asked if I'm slipping and feel that I am, I'll have enough sense to retire. Not that I'll ever really retire. I'll always enjoy playing five to eight tournaments. You don't really retire. You go into a different status."

But he's not ready for that different status, especially not in major tournaments.

"The majors are on good courses in 1978," he says. "The Masters is at Augusta, of course, but the U.S. Open is at Cherry Hills in Denver, the British Open at St. Andrews in Scotland and the PGA is at Oakmont outside Pittsburgh." He smiles. "That interests me. That excites me."

Jack Nicklaus' ego had flashed again, flashed a warning to his throne's pretenders—especially Tom Watson. ■



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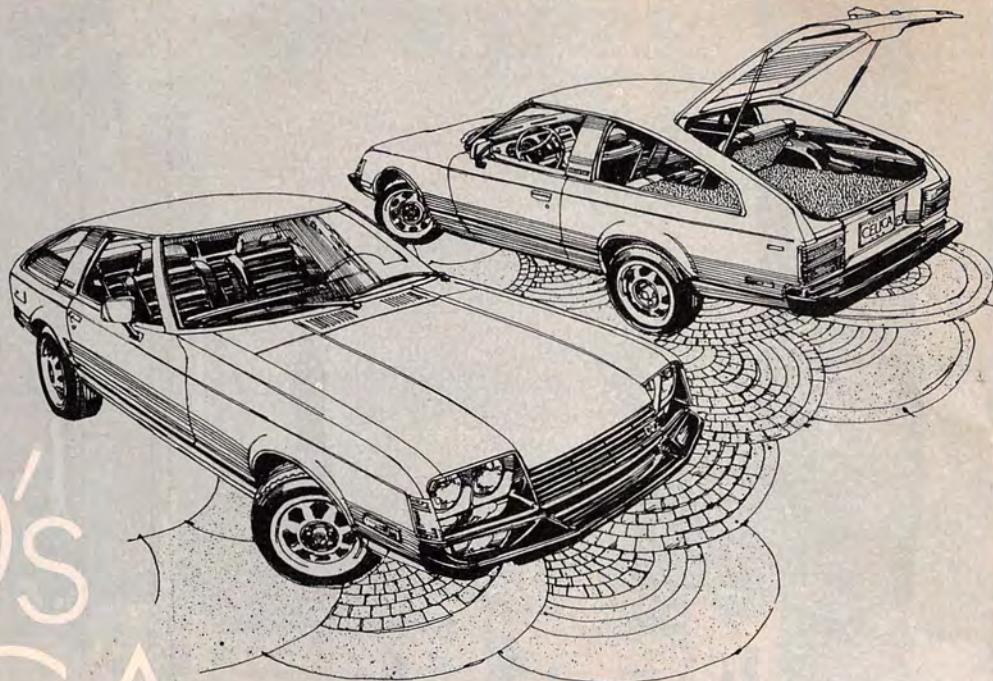
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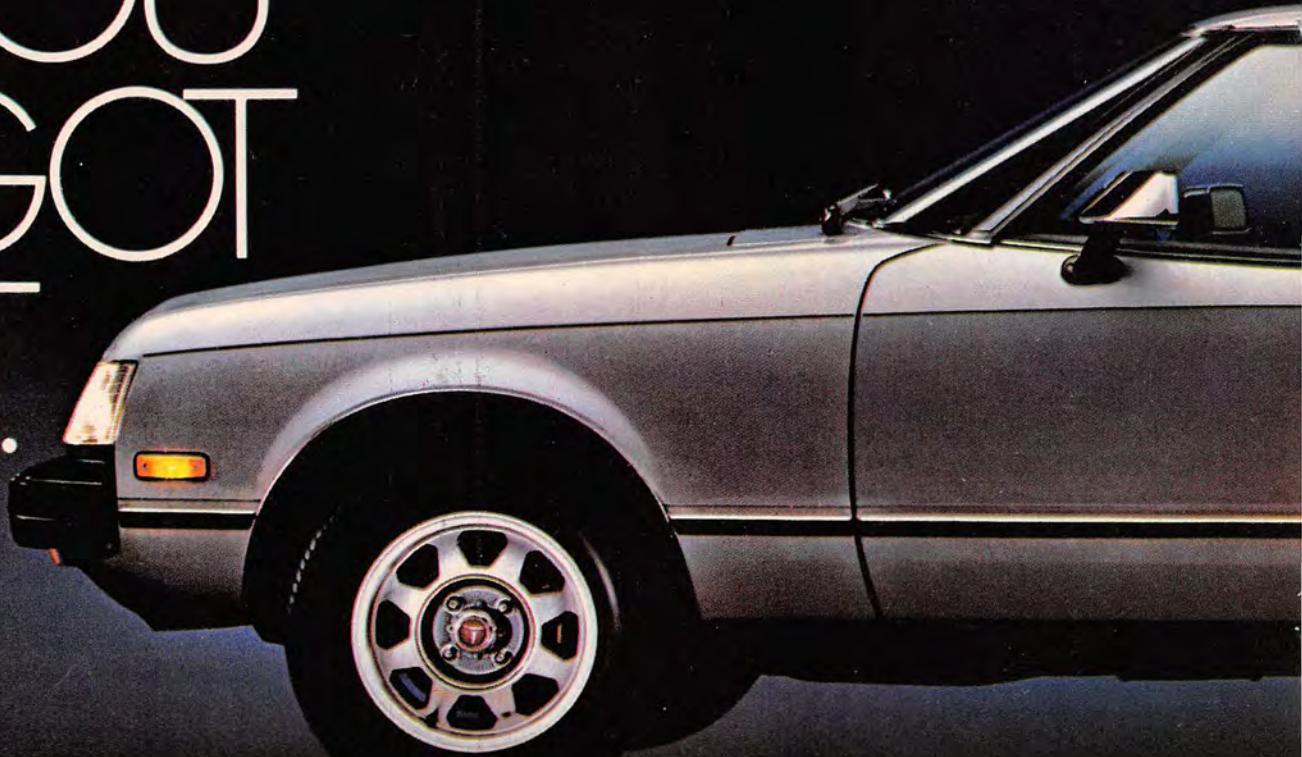
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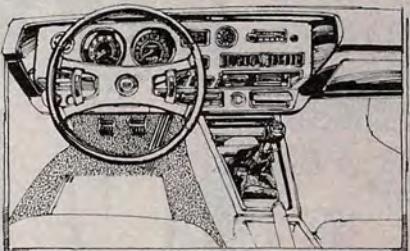
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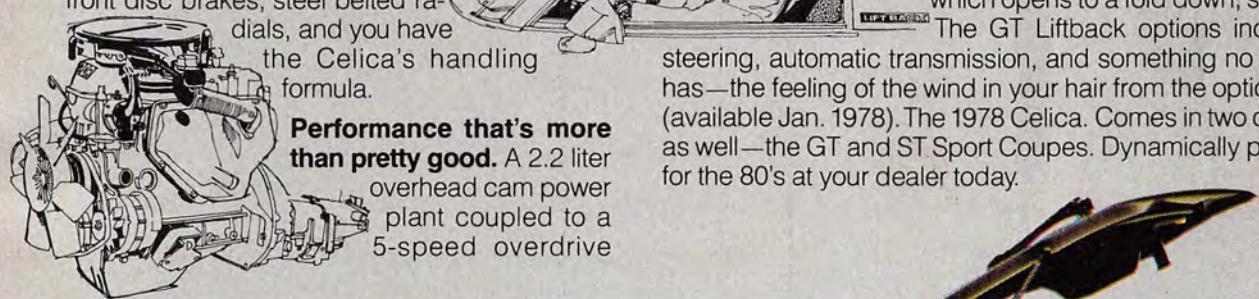
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Life in a game situation

by RICHARD O'CONNOR

Over 400 teenagers, all of them in basketball attire, are sitting on one-half of the basketball court in the run-down gymnasium at Five-Star Basketball Camp in Honesdale, Pa. A professional basketball coach paces before them, directly beneath the basket. He is impeccably dressed in red doubleknit shorts and a white mesh shirt, and he has just been introduced by camp director Howard Garfinkel as "perhaps the greatest basketball clinician in the country." The coach abruptly turns and faces his audience. "Some of you guys," he says in a low voice, "think you're pretty cool dudes. You got the funky moves, the dippity-do, slam-bam-in-your-face dunk and, hey, you think you got it together.

"Hey, man, a few years ago one of the greatest New York City high school players sat right where you're sitting. He could shoot, he could pass, he could rebound, and he had great speed, god-

Atlanta Hawks coach Hubie Brown is a great teacher whose lessons blend basketball technique with personal development. "You decide if you have the guts, the courage, the stamina to pursue success," he tells ballplayers. "It takes one hell of a man to strive and be defeated and frustrated and to continue striving"

damnit"—the coach's face swells, reddens, veins pop from his neck as his voice strains to reach its summit—"until his first bank heist. . . . He took three slugs up the right side, and in his second heist he took three up the left side. But he was cool, right?"

The coach breaks into a slow, exaggerated, rhythmic strut and says in a soft, soothing tone: "Yeah, baby, he was cool." He falls silent, grins sarcastically and shouts: "Cool, my f---ing ass. He's nowhere, baby. He blew the big opportunity. And why? Because he was a bad mother who didn't want to listen about the sacrifices it takes to make it, and once he failed he couldn't hack it."

The coach, Hubie Brown of the Atlanta Hawks, then claps his hands, indicating he wants a basketball. He is ready now to teach the game he loves. His audience is hushed and attentive. Four hundred teenagers can sense that this guy is going to be different.

Hubie Brown

Coaches in the National Basketball Association possess nearly uniform backgrounds. In most cases, they are ex-NBA stars who never caused trouble during their playing days and were unswervingly loyal to their teams. Or else they were once college coaches who were lured off the high school recruiting trails by visions of glory and dollars.

Hubie Brown belongs in neither category. He is the only pro basketball coach who is neither a former professional player nor a former college head coach. His path to the pros was unconventional, and it literally covered thousands and thousands of miles.

It is appropriate that Brown owns this distinction, for he has always strived to set himself apart from others. He is dedicated to the principles instilled in him by his father Charlie Brown, and even today, whatever he is doing, he is constantly aware of his father's maxim: "People will always be watching you and expecting things from you. Do not disappoint them. Stand out."

I arrived at the Omni, in Atlanta, to watch the Hawks practice, and found Brown prowling the sidelines. His face was intense, and his forehead was dotted with globules of sweat as he shouted instructions.

He directed the Hawks in a series of warmup drills, then divided the players into two teams. The teams took turns running undefended through the Hawks' offensive plays for 25 minutes until the choreography and the timing of the patterns was precise.

At one point, a forward suddenly deviated from his prescribed path, caught a pass and tossed in a beautiful 25-footer.

"Great shot, baby," Brown shouted. "But, hey . . . that ain't the play."

"I scored, didn't I?" the player said with a slight grin.

Brown glared at him; the player's smile vanished.

"Listen," Brown said to the group. "One guy breaks the pattern, scores and the fans go bullshit and his girlfriend shrieks 'my hero.' But what happens when the next guy does it and misses and the next guy misses and we're out of our offense and getting our butts kicked by 25? So don't give me that bullshit—'the shot went in.' I'm telling you, if it's not a shot to help the ballclub, you're gonna wave to your sweetie from the bench."

In Brown's system—where each player's movements are designed to create general floor balance (the big men in the vicinity of the basket, the guards back to defend against the fast break)—individual displays are not tolerated.

The Hawks scrimmaged for the re-

mainder of practice. Brown stood at midcourt, intently watching the action and occasionally stopping play to make corrections. Sometimes he was brutally cold ("Get your ass in gear or get the hell out of the gym."), other times he was gentle ("Don't worry about the mistake. You hustled and that's all I can ask."). But he was always exacting with his instructions. When Eddie Johnson, a rookie guard from Auburn, set a weak offensive screen, Brown halted play. "That's not a screen," he said, "that's a beauty pose. Get position, stand strong, take the punishment and create the play that's going to gain your teammate a one-step advantage. And, hey . . . you help him, he'll help you. That's how teams win collectively."

At the conclusion of practice, Brown assembled the team around him.

"Understand this," he said. "For us to win this season our strength must come from a strong, consolidated effort. You will all get your shots and your points and your playing time, but it'll all come only within the team concept."

"You get one chance at the NBA jewels and I'll be damned if this team isn't gonna unload its insides to get them. Some people are picking us to finish last in the division. I don't know about you, but I take this as a personal challenge—perhaps the greatest challenge of my coaching career. I know I'll be ready to face it with optimism and determination. You be prepared to do the same."

Brown began his coaching career in 1955 at St. Mary's High School in Little Falls, N.Y. After a two-year Army stint and a master's degree in education from Niagara, he resumed coaching at a number of small public high schools around New Jersey. In 1967 he became the freshman coach at William and Mary College in Virginia. One year later, he accepted the top assistant's job at Duke University.

During that period Brown cultivated a reputation as the best basketball clinician in the country. He traveled up and down the East Coast working at whatever boys' basketball camps would pay him.

"Hubie was incredible when he first started doing the camps," Howard Garkinkel recalled. "He was on a speedway making pit stops at basketball camps. The first time he spoke at Five-Star I knew he was something special. He had a presence that captivated the kids, and besides being a basketball genius, he was a superb entertainer."

Brown estimates that he worked at over 50 camps each summer, often giving a morning lecture, then driving up to six hours to another camp for an evening session. "I would kiss my wife



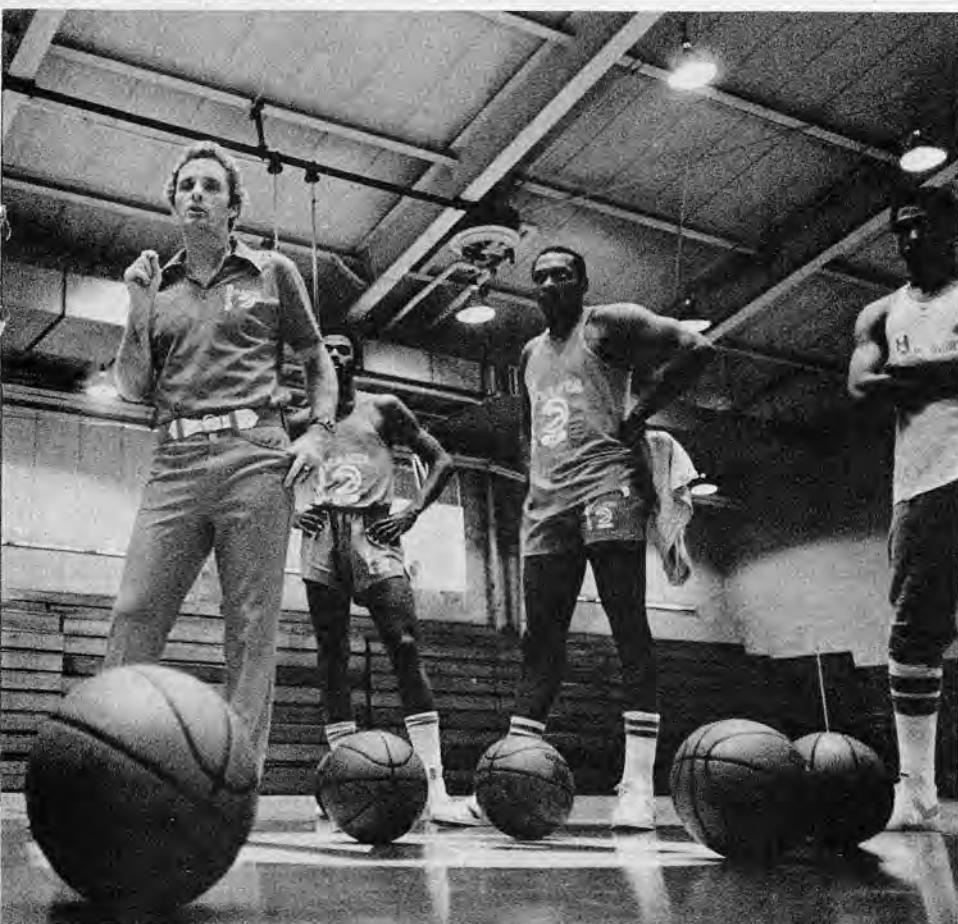
Claire goodbye every Sunday night and kiss her hello every Saturday morning," he says.

Brown's persistence paid off in 1972, when Milwaukee Bucks' coach Larry Costello, his former teammate at Niagara, named Brown his assistant. "I had heard Hubie speak about basketball on a number of occasions," says Costello. "His knowledge of the game was incisive and his mind was quick in formulating strategies against oppositional changes."

In 1975 Brown became the head coach of the Kentucky Colonels of the now-defunct American Basketball Association.

At Kentucky, Brown took over a team labeled "perennial bridesmaid" because of its inability to win the ABA championship with an abundance of stars, including Artis Gilmore, Dan Issel and Louie Dampier. Brown spent months viewing films of the Colonels' games and meeting individually with each player, then instituted drastic changes. He told Gilmore to shoot more and Issel to shoot less. He demanded teamwork from a squad that had shown little of it. The team responded and won its only ABA championship.

"Hubie Brown is the best coach I've ever had in the pros," Issel told reporters. "I wouldn't have believed it, but he



made me understand that playing less and shooting less would make me more productive."

Last season, Brown took over the Atlanta Hawks of the NBA. The team was inexperienced and lacked size and speed. Its prospects were so bleak that one sports magazine predicted: "If Hubie Brown wins anything in Atlanta he should change his name to Vince."

Although the Hawks won more games last year than they had the previous year under coach Cotton Fitzsimmons (and that was without injured guard Geoff Petrie), rumors circulated prior to this season that Hubie wouldn't last eight games into the season. Some league coaches predicted that the Hawks' mercurial owner, Ted Turner, would fire Brown if Atlanta got off to a bad start.

The team seemed likely to do just that. At the beginning of fall practice, Petrie retired, veteran All-Star Lou Hudson was traded to Los Angeles and center Joe Meriweather was traded to New Orleans. The worst loss, though, was all-league forward Leonard "Truck" Robinson, a free-agent who signed with the New Orleans Jazz.

Losing Robinson infuriated Brown, who felt Hawk general manager Mike Storen, the former ABA commissioner, had mishandled Robinson's salary ne-

gotiations. "The Robinson affair was totally botched," said Brown. "Truck should still be in Atlanta."

Storen then acquired Portland's rookie guard Rich Laurel for two future draft choices.

"We just don't need Laurel," said Brown. "Especially at the expense of two draft picks. The deal was absurd."

Storen did not take kindly to Brown's remarks. He says that he believed that the coach was undercutting his position as GM by holding his own phone conversations with New Orleans Jazz officials regarding Truck Robinson. In what seemed like an attempt to protect himself, Storen inquired about the possibility of tapping Brown's office phone. When Hubie learned of the idea, he exploded.

Ted Turner, who had skippered the yacht *Courageous* in a successful defense of the Americas Cup, returned to the Hawks' troubled waters. He met with the board of directors, talked with Storen and Brown, and promptly announced that Storen was history.

"Storen obviously came to the Hawks hoping to take over and surround himself with his own people," Brown told me. "He admitted to tapping my phone and it backfired. You know me well enough to know that if John Y. [John Y. Brown, the former

Brown is both cold and gentle in Hawk practices, but he is always exacting and demands compliance to team patterns.

owner of the Kentucky Colonels] couldn't bullshit me around, Mike Storen damn well wasn't going to either." (When asked about Brown's charge that he had admitted tapping his phone, Storen said, "That's a straight out lie. I asked a workman at the Omni if it was possible and, for the love of me, I don't even remember the name of the guy I asked.")

Despite the dearth of talent on the roster, the front-office controversy, a lack of fan support and the fact that Atlanta lost *all* of its exhibition games, Brown led the Hawks to first place in the Central Division with an 8-1 record a month into the season—their best start since the franchise shifted from St. Louis to Atlanta in 1969.

Brown accomplished this by making strict demands of his players. He is a strategist, not a nursemaid. He teaches and requires fullcourt pressure all game long—a constant hounding, scratching defense designed to badger an opponent into mistakes. Brown's intimidating defensive strategy is exhibited by a pair of substitute guards, rookie Eddie Johnson and former Eastern League scoring leader, 5-foot-8 Charlie Criss, both of whom play fierce, physical ball.

"The key," Brown says, "is that I play ten men a quarter. This gives everyone a chance to contribute to the team as a whole. In short, each player has his role and his responsibilities. Also, I am not burdened with long-term, six-figure contracts. My guys barely make the minimum. They're hungry. Coachable. They're willing to put their guts on the line . . . running and pressing for the full 48 minutes each game, because they want to prove they can compete in the NBA. And I think our style of play now attracts the fans."

"Not once during the front-office controversy did Hubie ever bring his problems on the court," says John Brown, a Hawks' starting forward. "He concerned himself only with motivating the players and teaching basketball. And face it, Hubie's strictly a teacher anyway. Our success so far indicates that. We are a confident and cooperative unit, a team which, thanks to Hubie, refuses to lose."

Mike Gearon, the Hawks' new GM, concurs. "The success of the Hawks is in one word—Hubie. The man is absolutely the most organized, well-informed coach I've ever seen. He treats the players as if they never played basketball before. He started teaching the fundamentals from day one, and it has paid off. I'm amazed by how many local

Hubie Brown

coaches come to observe Hubie's practices. It's like they're getting a free clinic. And I'll say this about Hubie: What he has accomplished so far goes way beyond our greatest expectations."

No one expects the Hawks to make the playoffs, but no one expected them to get off to an 8-1 start, either.

The air in the Pocono Mountains was cool and tangy when I met Brown at Five-Star last summer. We sat down in the lunchroom to talk, and I instantly discovered a friendly, unpretentious man. Brown spoke about his wife of 25 years, his three daughters and son, his hometown, his father and his passionate belief in Catholicism.

Brown, 44, is a thin man, six feet tall, slightly stooped over, possessing a cheerful, ruddy face. He has graying hair, a lopsided grin and a disposition easily given to laughter. His wide, hazel eyes dwell on you with compassion.

One of the first things Hubie mentions is the ABA championship ring on his right index finger. It is his symbol of having made it to the top from his beginnings as a tough, streetcorner kid from Newark, N.J., a place where delinquency runs rampant and success hinges on fortune and determination.

Hubie Brown's good fortune was his father. A grade school dropout turned laborer, Charles "Charlie" Brown saw that his son was fond of athletics. So he encouraged him, supervising his workouts, attending all his games and lecturing him on pride and persistence. For as long as Hubie can remember, he called his father Charlie, never dad. That's how Charlie wanted it. After all, they were best friends.

As a senior at St. Mary's High School in Elizabeth, N.J., Hubie made All-State in football, baseball and basketball, and won a combination baseball/basketball scholarship to Niagara University.

"Hubie was the fiercest competitor I had ever seen in high school," says Al Labalbo, Brown's high school coach, and presently the basketball coach at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Rutherford, N.J. "He not only competed against his opponent but also against himself. He was forever trying to improve his performance."

"The day I left for Niagara," Hubie recalled in the Five-Star lunchroom, "Charlie told me that because our family had no money and no car he wouldn't be able to see me play in college unless the team came to New York, which only happened once."

"Charlie had never missed seeing me play. But he made me promise that whenever I played I should pick out an

elderly man from the stands and play especially for him. 'It's your responsibility,' Charlie said, 'to impress that man. After seeing you play let him leave the gym knowing your name and that you gave everything you had.' Everytime I stepped on the court I picked out someone's face. I still do it."

Charlie Brown died before the Kentucky Colonels won the ABA championship. But, to Hubie, Charlie was present in Louisville's Freedom Hall. "Two of my best friends had reserved seats for the final game directly across from the bench," Hubie said. "Between them was an empty one. That one was for Charlie."

Because of his father's influence, Brown derives a special pleasure from instructing youngsters, especially like those at Five-Star. "A great coach must be a great educator," he said. "Dribbling a basketball is only one iota of what it's all about for a kid when he steps on the court. Hey . . . it's learning time . . . it's cooperation, integrity, discipline and pressure. It's life in a

"Remember: Cool is having it made, not saying you're gonna make it"

game situation. And some kids, if they are unprepared, are shocked when the game ends and reality sets in.

"I want to give the kids the things Charlie gave to me, the tangibles that pertain not only to sports but also life. Shit, all kids can't make the pros. And if they don't make it, they've got to employ the same drive to succeed in another field. Hell, I wanted to be a pro and I failed. So I turned to coaching, worked my ass off and did well."

"When I finish a lecture I want every kid to feel he was given knowledge, technique, entertainment and a message: You get one shot at the big time. Don't blow it by being cool. I want these kids to know I care about them."

It's a damn shame that the coaches who attend Brown's lectures don't scribble more in their notebooks than just diagrams. As a former high school, college and professional (a cup of Gatorade) basketball player, I have played for and observed many college and professional coaches. You could play for most of them for ten years and learn no more than how to shoot a jump shot. But Brown has a unique, seamless way of blending basketball technique with an education in shooting for life goals. That is how coaches should be coaching.

Hubie Brown is really into his lecture at Five-Star now, his white mesh shirt is hanging out and blotched with sweat. His hair is disheveled. His voice is hoarse, his face as colorless as an Andrew Wyeth portrait.

For most of the last hour he has been jumping up and down while demonstrating rebound positioning, or weaving and cutting repeatedly to illustrate offensive fundamentals. Now he is crouched in a defensive position and sliding across the foul lane. "To be a great defensive player," he says, "bend your knees and keep your f---ing legs moving. Stay with your man. Jump in his jock. And when he comes charging at you . . . bang—" Brown pounds his chest and takes a hard fall backwards "—you get your ass in there for an offensive charge. Hey, that might not get you in the backseat of the old VW with a buxom cheerleader, but it'll sure excite your coach."

He gets up and moves quickly back and forth across the court, pointing at campers and saying, "You and you and you, don't tell me you can't give it all on defense because you're saving yourself for offense. Because," he says, his voice starting to rise, "that's f---ing bullshit. You'll get your points."

Brown moves to the middle of the court. "What I gave you today is only the design," he says. "You build the foundation. You decide if you want to be great; you decide if you have the guts, the courage, the stamina to pursue success. Because I'll tell you, it takes one f---ing hell of a man to strive and be defeated and be frustrated and to continue striving. I know all about it. To get where I am today was no candy-ass road. I busted my ass. I knew what I wanted and I went after it. You must do the same. And don't bullshit me by saying, 'Hey, Coach, I want to be a pro,' and think you're gonna do it by hangin' on the corner with mamas and drugs."

Exhausted, virtually voiceless, Brown extends his hands out in the manner of a beggar and says, "Hey, life's a series of chances and challenges. Right now some of you have the gift of athletic talent and the chance to use it for greater ends. Please . . . don't blow it. Remember: Cool is having it made, not saying you're gonna make it."

Brown starts to walk off. Then the campers stand and applaud and whistle—all of them, the black kid from Bedford-Stuyvesant, the Jewish kid from Forest Hills, the Protestant kid from Scarsdale, all of them, engulfing this sweating figure in wave after wave of deafening admiration.

But as the applause continues, Brown does not stop—he cannot stop—because he has another camp to make and he doesn't wish to be late. ■

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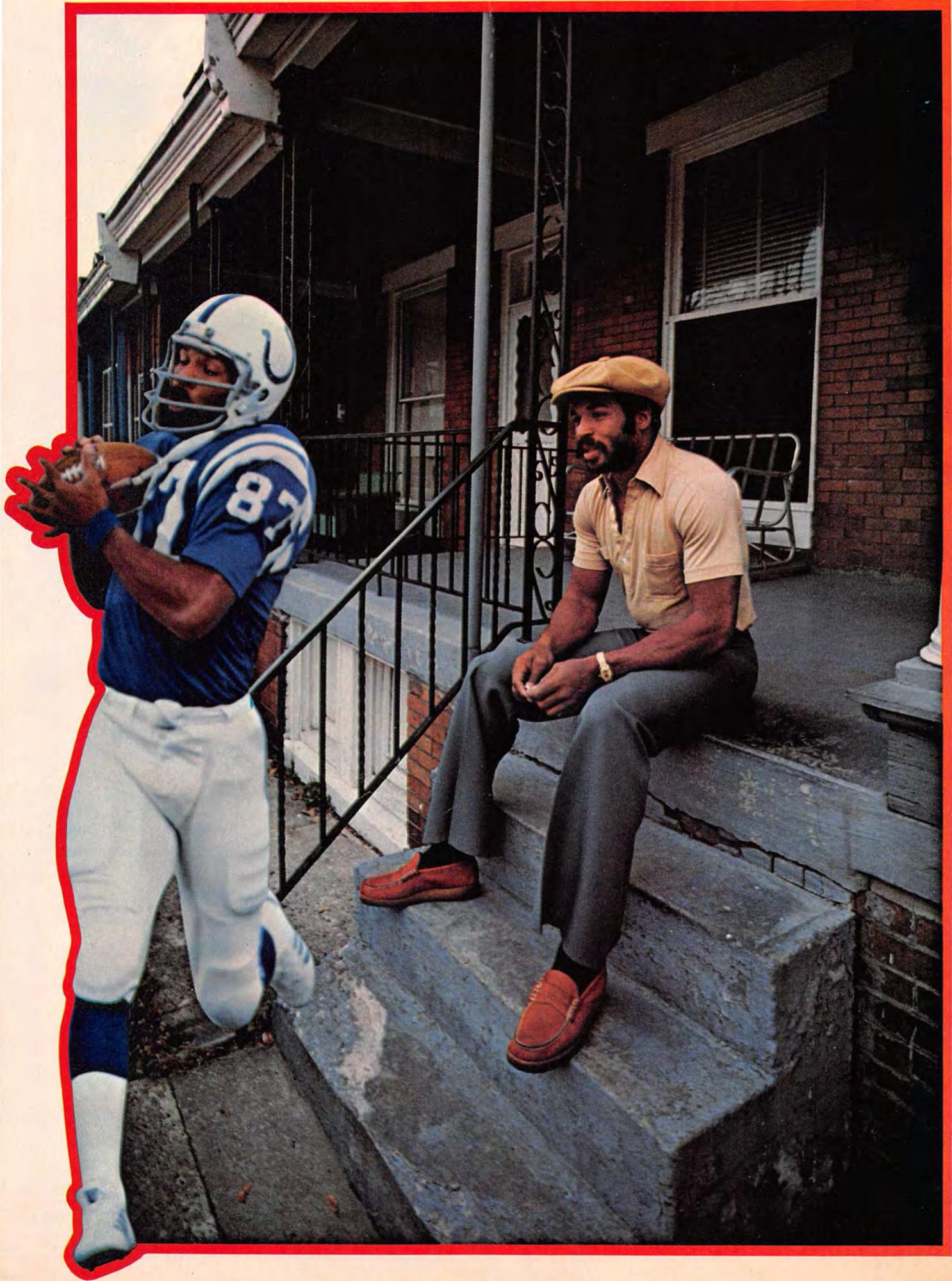
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NAVY. IT'S NOT JUST A JOB, IT'S AN ADVENTURE.



"You got to look in the mirror"

That's the guiding principle of the Colts' fine tight end, Raymond Chester, whose concern for others is as consuming as his on-field drive to "kick ass"—which he does with distinct glee

by ROBERT WARD

Jack Ham, Pittsburgh's ace outside linebacker, sees the sweep developing, and he is moving, flowing confidently toward the ball carrier, Colt halfback Lydell Mitchell, stringing out the play toward the sideline so that Mitchell can't turn up field. From the pressbox it looks as though the Colts' star runner is about to be thrown down for a three-yard loss. He simply has no place to go. I watch Mitchell gear down as Ham and defensive end Dwight White prepare to grind him into the dust, just as they had done the past two years in the playoffs. But suddenly, Ham, himself, is met by a huge black stork, who races at him with elbows flailing. Ham takes a step back, tries to avoid Colt tight end Raymond Chester without losing his head on Mitchell. But the backward step is fatal, for as he takes it, Mitchell shifts into overdrive, and when Ham tries to regain his angle . . . he is pulverized by that low driving, gangly piledriver who seemingly came out of nowhere. The entire crowd of 60,225 fans in Baltimore's Memorial Stadium (also known as "The Insane Asylum on 33rd Street") lets out a collective "Ooooooooh," which sounds remarkably like sympathy pains for Ham. The man next to me in the pressbox, a black reporter from Hanover, Pa., shakes his head and says, "Goddamn, what a block. That Raymond Chester is one killer tight end."

Chester isn't finished. As Mitchell scoots down the sideline, careening off tacklers like certain blessed drunks careen off cars, Raymond Chester has picked himself up off of Jack Ham's prone body, and is loping down the field after one of Pittsburgh's defensive backs. To my amazement, he catches one of them who is about to leap on Mitchell's back . . . and there goes Chester again, head down, legs churning, those wide shoulders, smashing into the poor guy from the side . . . a perfectly clean block, and the guy goes down like he was poleaxed. As for Mitchell, he is fi-

nally dropped by two panting Steelers.

On the radio next to me I can hear Colt announcer Chuck Thompson bursting into superlatives about Mitchell's run, the way he bounces off tacklers, keeps his balance and seems to pick up four or five extra yards on his own. No mention is made of Chester. But watching the field closely one can see Lydell come back to the huddle, tap Chester on the butt, and when Chester turns, Lydell nods. Mitchell knows who made the play work . . . as does head coach Ted Marchibroda. The glory, as always in pro football, belongs to the visible running back, but whether he is Lydell Mitchell or Walter Payton, he goes nowhere if he is met head-on by the likes of the Pittsburgh Steel Curtain. Raymond Chester's job is to help turn the Steel Curtain into the Maginot Line, a job which he completes with awesome efficiency and what looks like pure joy. The man just loves to hit people. At 29 he still plays with all the abandon he did eight years ago as a rookie. He gets off the ball as fast as any end in football, he hones in on the linebacker or he traps the opposing tackle, and when they need him for a crucial third-down pass, Raymond Chester is there. As Pittsburgh is only too aware of this day. All afternoon the Colts run off Chester's side, enabling Mitchell to pick up 100 yards rushing, and making it possible for Bert Jones to fade back and loft passes over the Steeler defense.

At game's end the Colts have trounced the Steelers 31-21. Raymond Chester has caught only one nine-yard pass and has gone almost unnoticed by most of the Colts fans. But he walks off the field feeling good, and as he does the coach comes over and pats him on the back. As do wide receiver Freddie Scott and injured defensive tackle Joe Ehrmann. They know what R.C. "Cola" Chester means to the Colts.

Raymond Chester strips his pads off in the lockerroom, over in the corner next to his friend, Freddie "Bones" Scott, a slight 6-2, 170-pounder. Chester is big, 6-4, 236 pounds, but once he takes off his pads he appears surpris-

ingly slender, a muscularly lanky man. I think this guy isn't big enough to block down on a huge defensive end.

Then a reporter congratulates Chester and asks him if he had thought the Colts would beat their old nemesis, the Steelers, as badly as they did. Chester smiles and does a cheesecake imitation of Superman, flexing his muscles and says, "Come on, Paul, you know better than to ask me that question. . . . There ain't any time I don't think we can go out there and kick ass." I stare at Chester's bulging arms and chest—and I see he is large enough to be a devastating tight end.

"Congratulations," I say to him. "You played a great game today."

Chester smiles and right away I like him. It's not the "love me, love me" egomaniac smile of so many pro athletes or the surly Mr. Macho bit . . . it's a genuinely warm smile.

"Thanks," he says. "This was a big one. . . . We took a whipping from New England last week . . . and people were starting to say we couldn't beat the physical teams like Pittsburgh."

"Actually," I say, "I read that you said that."

"No, what I said was . . . 'we've got to beat those teams.' Lydell said it too. And we did today. . . ."

"You guys really whipped the Steeler front four."

"Yeah," says Chester. "David Taylor was terrific. He's our best lineman now, though George Kunz is great too. But we just frustrated the hell out of them. Excuse me, I've got to take a shower."

Chester leaves and I ask Scott about him.

Scott, who smiles constantly and seems about the happiest athlete I've ever met (he's also completing medical school in the off-season), really turns on the grin and says, "You are doing a story on Raymond Chester? Good. He deserves it. He goes out and gets them. He's Carlos Nivar. . . . He's the Mando Warrior."

"Carlos who?" I say.

"Carlos Nivar . . . R.C. . . . The Mando Warrior," says Scott. "Raymond

Chester

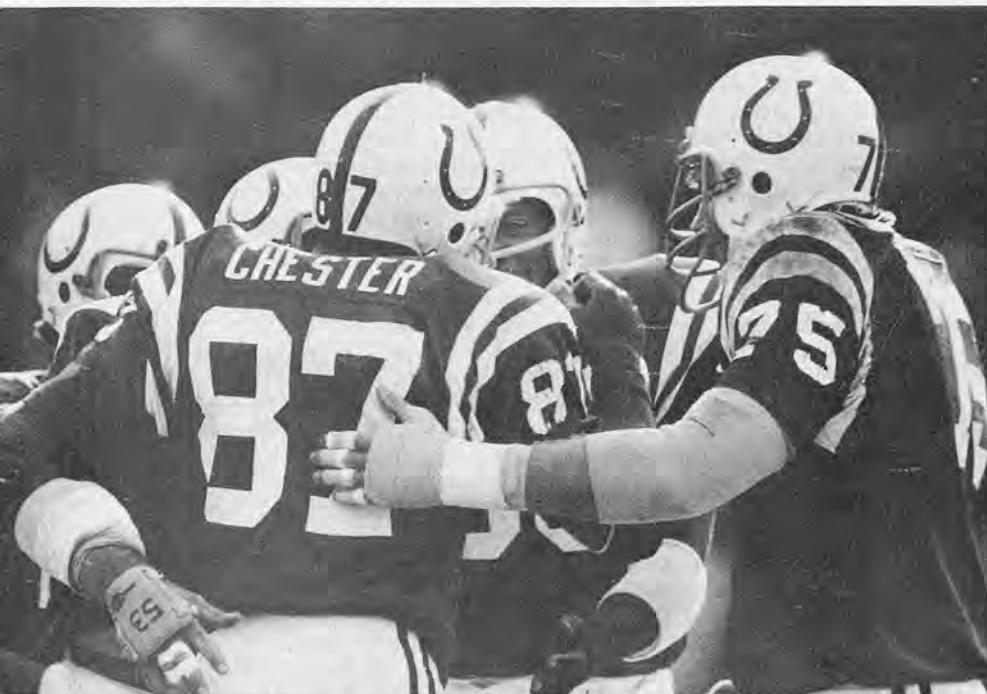
has a million nicknames. He's emotional—though you won't see it off the field. But down there on the field, he gets people fired up. He leads the team . . . plays a mean bass, too."

"Plays bass?"

"Sure," says Scott. "In our group, the Bakers. We got Raymond on bass, Lloyd Mumford on harmonica, Glenn Doughty on congas and I play percussion. [Ex-Colt] D.T. White is our lead guitarist and Bruce Barnett, who

Bubba Smith. It wasn't easy going from a winner to a loser, going from personal recognition as an All-Star to an all but forgotten ballplayer. It wasn't easy, but Raymond Chester made sure that it wasn't all that hard, either.

Chester is driving his big Buick through an old section of Baltimore called Waverly, where I grew up, and I say, "Lord, it's been a long time since I've been through here."



"Raymond Chester is a great leader," say his Colt teammates, who here congratulate him after a tough reception.

actually is a baker, plays drums. You oughta hear us gig some time. But we won't be doing any for a while because the roughest part of our schedule is coming up."

Chester comes back from the showers and pretends to spar with a reporter. Scott smiles at him and shakes his head, and you can nearly feel the love between them. Indeed, there is a feeling throughout the Colt clubhouse of warmth and intelligence . . . from coach Ted Marchibroda to quarterback Bert Jones, right down to the lesser-sung players like Raymond Chester.

But he is not unsung among the Colts. Chester's spirit and determination, they say, were instrumental in sustaining the Colts through the team's dark days (a 4-10 record in 1973, 2-12 in '74). A No. 1 draft choice of the Oakland Raiders in 1970, Chester went on to be named the National Football League's Rookie of the Year, then made the AFC All-Star teams in 1971 and '72 . . . before being traded to the Colts for defensive end

"Yeah," says Chester, also a Baltimore native. "It's strange coming back to this town."

"When I was younger," I say, "all I ever dreamt of was getting the hell out of here. It seemed like such a dead end . . . so damned provincial. But I keep coming back . . . when you grow up in this place it does something to you."

"I know what you mean," he says. "People around here believe in neighborhoods, man."

"Right," I say, laughing. "I remember as a kid you said, 'Hey, man, I'm from Waverly' or 'I'm from Park Heights.' You never even thought of yourself being from Baltimore. We used to call my neighborhood the 'Four Block Cell' . . . we hardly ever went outside of it."

Chester smiles and nods. "We are heading right for my Cell right now," he says. "Yeah, you understand it . . . but there are a lot of good things about that . . . a lot of things that create a sense of character, of closeness. Man, I still love the old neighborhood. As you get older you see the value of it. Especially this year."

Chester grows silent, as if there is

something he wants to say, but finds difficult.

"Why this year?"

"This year my father died. I have a farm down in Southern Maryland . . . and my father and I were talking about really getting it going, making it a real working farm. So Dad was down there, out chopping wood, and he twisted his ankle . . . fell over . . . but it turned out he had a stroke. He called and said he was alright. Then he went to the hospital and three days later he was dead . . . we had all the kids come in for the funeral . . . my three brothers and five sisters."

"I'm sorry," I say. "It must have had quite an effect on you."

"It has," Chester says. "It makes you realize that there are so many more important things than simply football . . . I've always believed that, anyway. My father always stressed that . . . but . . ." He shakes his head.

"Are you the oldest brother?" I ask.

"No . . . my older brother was shot to death in Detroit, murdered . . . nobody knows what happened."

"Christ," I say, "you've been through a lot."

"Yeah . . . but I've had it good too."

Chester smiles as we reach his old neighborhood on the lower northwest side of town. "Here it is," says Chester, as he stops at his old house. "I spent a lot of time on that stoop . . . and awful lot of time . . . naming the cars going by."

"The great Baltimore pastime," I say.

"And right next door here is where my wife lived . . . Sharon. We met when I was eight and she was six . . . we used to go through the bathroom skylight, and sit up on the roof. Then we went to Douglass High School together . . . and I started playing athletics . . . we've been together ever since."

"Down there," says Raymond, pointing to the street corner. "Down there is where we used to sing . . . Man, I can still remember it. . . . We used to do all the Coasters' songs: 'Yakety Yak' and 'Charlie Brown.' We did 'em cause they had all those parts in 'em . . ."

"How about 'In the Still of the Night'?" I say, amazed at the similarities between our experience. My own Baltimore street corner was Winston and Stonewood, and we sang the same songs.

"Oh yeah—that was a *big* favorite . . . A great one. Let's see what's happening down at the Walbrook Inn . . ."

It is a typical Baltimore street corner bar, dark, dusty. Black men sit at the bar and tables, replaying yesterday's Colt victory, and when Chester walks in he is immediately recognized by his

"Smoking. Here's what I'm doing about it."

"I like the taste of a good cigarette and I don't intend to settle for less. But like a lot of people I'm also aware of what's being said. And like a lot of people I began searching for a cigarette that could give me the taste I like with less tar.

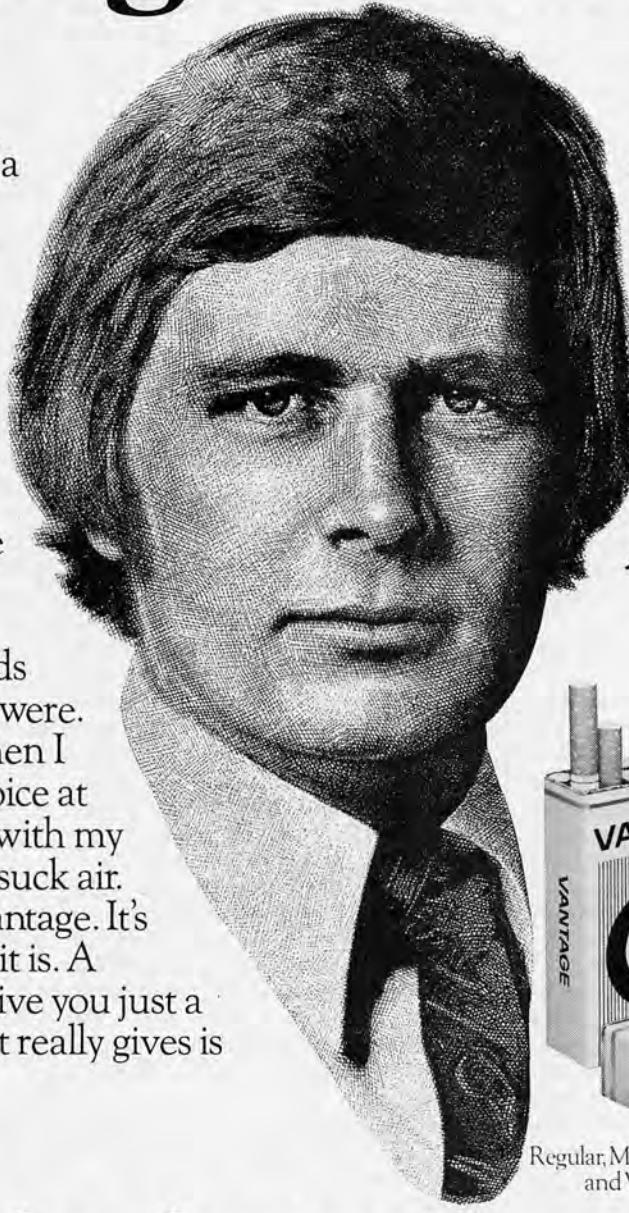
"I thought there would be a lot of brands to choose from. There were. Until I tasted them. Then I knew there was no choice at all. I either had to stay with my high-tar cigarettes. Or suck air.

"Then I found Vantage. It's everything the ads say it is. A cigarette that doesn't give you just a lot of promises. What it really gives is

a lot of taste. And with much less tar than what I'd smoked before.

"What am I doing about smoking? I'm smoking Vantage."

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Vantage. A lot of taste without a lot of tar.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
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MENTHOL: 11 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report AUG. '77,
FILTER 100's: 11 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

Chester

godfather, Leroy Powers. "Hey, look who it is," says Leroy. "You boys did it yesterday."

The rest of the patrons stop drinking, turn and smile at Chester. There is a pride in their smiles and a shyness . . . as if they are almost afraid to talk with him. The Colts are the stuff of dreams in Baltimore.

"Well you did a job on that Mean Joe Greene yesterday," says Leroy Powers. "That boy looked like he was going to run home to his Mama."

Raymond smiles a bit awkwardly. His own modesty makes it difficult for him to relate to his old neighbors as a hero. But these are his people, this is where he came from and he relaxes everyone with his warmth. Behind me, a skinny black man with bulging eyes and a crazed look taps me on the back and says, "I . . . I . . . I . . . know you . . . from . . . Mason Streeteeet!"

"No," I say. "I don't—"

The man lets out an eerie, disembodied cackle. Chester, who is chatting and shaking hands with the men at the bar, sees my situation and walks over.

"Hi, Henry," he says, shaking the man's hand.

"You on the team?" Henry asks, and Raymond patiently answers him as I move off to talk with Chester's godfather.

"We always kept an eye on him," Mr. Powers says, smiling. "We didn't let him stray too far from this corner . . . Everybody in the neighborhood watched out for him."

"You knew he was going to be special?"

"I knew it when he went to Douglass. He was a track star, a wrestler and played tackle on the football team. When he played end at Morgan State he came over to see me the night after he was picked number one in the draft . . . He said, 'Well, do you think I can make it?' and I said, 'Listen, you got it made. They have Billy Cannon out there and he's been around a long time. You'll beat him out.' And he did."

As we get back into Chester's car, he talks about his old friends. "There were a lot of boys in this neighborhood who didn't make it. . . . A lot of them ended up in Vietnam . . . some of them were killed . . . a terrific athlete in the neighborhood, Terry Whitehurst, was shot to death on lower North Avenue . . . but most of the guys like my friends Joseph Barber and Edward Bailey got out of high school and ended up working regularly, getting married. . . . Joe works at Bethlehem Steel. . . . This was a tight neighborhood and I developed a protective thing about the little kids. We always watched out for one another as

much as we could, and I think that had a lot to do with the way I play the game . . . the sense of being a team player . . . the sense that you are one man in a whole system, and you got to do your job . . . but respect the other men . . . I don't know if that's what everybody feels anymore . . . but I learned a lot of that right here in this neighborhood, and in my family . . . and later from coach Earl Banks at Morgan. He was like a father to me. He's still like that . . . he's one of the reasons it's been easier to come back to Baltimore."

In the Colts lockerroom the next day, bearded defensive tackle Joe Ehrmann says, "Raymond Chester is a great leader. . . . But more than that he's got character. Man, we went through those losing seasons . . . when we had Howard Schnellenberger, then Joe Thomas coaching us, and we had one offensive play—run right. Raymond had come from Oakland where he was All-Pro and here he hardly ever got thrown the ball . . . He could have quit, but he kept

"Sometimes I worry that Raymond is too selfless. He ought to strut his own stuff"

our spirits up. You know he'd been on a winner, and he had that . . . charisma . . . When [defensive end] Mike Barnes and I used to get really down on ourselves, Raymond would come over and we'd play poker. . . . That's how we got the Looney Tunes nicknames . . . out of desperation really. . . . Raymond always had another nickname, some jive to lift us out of things . . . he's a born leader. Another thing, if he's your friend, he's your friend for life."

Mike Barnes comes in and says, "You know, it's good that somebody is doing a story on 'Cola' again, because he's a great player and because he's an open and honest person. I remember on a couple of occasions when his friends were released from the team, he took it very hard. Especially Ollie Smith. I was rooming with Ollie at the time, and it hurt me tremendously, but I was only a rookie and I couldn't say anything about it. Raymond walked out for a day and paid a big fine . . . but it was worth it to him. That's how he is. From the day he got here . . . he's been somebody you could always count on."

I recalled what Chester had told me about the neighborhood, about his being a protector of the little kids on the tough Baltimore streets. To survive as a kid in

my old city, with its rugged, blue-collar ethic, its conservatism, its stifling neighborhoods, you learned early that loyalty to friends was all important. Because in that hostile environment good friends were often all you had.

"I remember the day I was traded from Oakland to Baltimore," Raymond Chester says, as we sit down to dinner at Thompson's Sea Girt House near my old neighborhood, Waverly. "It was the day before practice was to start, and I was out buying some track shoes. When I got home, Sharon said I had a call from Al Davis' secretary . . . and I got this kind of sick feeling in the bottom of my stomach, because I knew that I'd see him the very next day . . . so there was only one reason to call me. I knew it, before I called him back, but I didn't want to admit it. We'd just started a liquor store business, and I was very close with my teammates . . . and I was active in a program I helped start in the inner city in Oakland . . . for kids . . . and I kept thinking, 'They know I've got all this going for me, they know it . . . they couldn't just trade me.' But deep down I knew . . . so I called Al Davis and as soon as he got on I said, 'Where to?' and he said, 'Baltimore.' I thought, 'God . . . not back there.' My family didn't go for it either. We have a wonderful home in Oakland. It was rough."

The waiter brings us our seafood au gratin, Baltimore crab cakes and National Bohemian beer. Then Chester continues, "Knowing people here made it easier. If it had been any other team in football I might have just quit. But it still wasn't no picnic. I got here, and saw Eddie Hinton and some of the guys who were still here from the old days, and then suddenly they were gone, and we didn't know what the hell was going on. Joe Thomas was a great general manager, but he didn't know that much about the technical aspects of the game. One time he sent in [quarterback] Marty Domres and told him to run the 'wiggle waggle' play. . . . Nobody knew what the hell he was talking about. We all just cracked up. It was a tough period for me, because they didn't pass to me, and the fans were all down on us."

"I didn't know if I could cut it anymore. You know if you aren't used, you wonder if you can still do it. But guys like Joe Ehrmann and Mike Barnes and the fact that we had a great respect between the black and white players on the team . . . well, we stuck it out. Then we got it going two years ago, and put together that nine-game winning streak, and that personally was the most satisfying thing I've ever experienced in football. . . ."

"I notice you talk a lot about the

team, and everyone says you're a great team man, but don't you ever wish you were a little more . . . colorful? Then you'd get noticed more."

Chester smiles ruefully. "Sure, I think about that. You know I had some great years at Oakland and everybody noticed me. . . . Then I dropped out of sight when we were losing here, and the other younger tight ends like Dave Casper and Russ Francis got all the ink. Sometimes I feel a little sorry for myself . . . but if it meant doing something crazy to get the publicity, that's not me. Take a guy like Mike Curtis. He was *really* crazy. . . . He'd threaten guys in practice when they knocked him down, and they'd come right back and knock him down again. It was funny, but it was sad, too, because I kept thinking after his playing days are over, man, is he going to be *alone!* You see, the thing I value most about myself as a football player is playing good, hard, *clean* football. I'll never clip a guy . . . because when I'm out there I have to think of myself as responsible to my wife and kids, to my community and to myself. Coach Banks used to say, 'You got to look in the mirror,' and that's the truth . . . Consistency is what I look for most in a person on the field or off. . . . I've missed two games in eight years. That's a record I can be proud of. I always try and help the rookies too. That's another one coach Banks taught me: 'No matter how old you are, you are always going to be a rookie at something.' Like right now I'm a rookie at the bass. And I get frustrated, being almost 30 years old and having my hands all busted up, but I'm going to get really good at it."

"I play a little myself," I say, and we make a date to play later, but first I have an appointment at Morgan State College in Baltimore with Earl Banks, Chester's college coach who is now the school's athletic director.

"How did you recruit Raymond?" I ask the great bear of a man.

Banks laughs. "Well, at Douglass the coach of the team was Roy Cragway, a Morgan graduate, and Raymond was a tackle at Douglass. He was headed for the University of Maryland. They were going to make him a tackle there. So I told him if he came to Morgan I'd make him a tight end. That was a little bit selfish on my part, because we never threw the ball. He was going to be a *blocking* tight end, but I didn't tell him that. He thought he was going to catch all these passes."

Banks cracks up at the con.

"Still, all that blocking paid off for him, didn't it? He can block with the best of them. He can catch well, too,

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Chester

although he made himself a good pass receiver. He wasn't blessed with great hands. He just kept working at it, hour after hour. Raymond always had drive and pride. You know the old saying in the '60s: 'I've got to do my thing?' Well, I always preached that in any endeavor it's not 'I've got to do my thing,' but 'We've got to do *our* thing.' Athletes more and more don't believe this. But Raymond always understood. He's a team man. He's concerned for his teammates as people. In a minute he would carry the cause for the players. In fact, sometimes I worry that he takes it too far. That he is too selfless. He ought to strut his own stuff too. You don't have to be a saint."

"Well, the picture I'm getting of Chester is almost too good," I say. "He seems to have been born mature."

Banks smiles. "No. He wasn't always that mature. I remember we were supposed to practice for a postseason game and it was cold as hell, and the players didn't want to practice and they looked to Raymond to lead their cause. When I got to the lockerroom he had them all sitting around and he announced they weren't practicing, and I said, 'You of all people should want to go to that game and do well, because you have a chance to go to the pros.' He did and had a great game against Texas-Southern, and was picked on the first round. I remember that night, too. Raymond came to me all excited and he said, 'Coach, I promise that I'll never do anything to make Morgan or you ashamed of me.' And he never has. This year he called me from Oakland, and he said, 'How you doing?' and I told him we were scraping by and he said, 'I've got something for you,' and he contributed several thousand dollars to our athletic scholarship fund. Raymond doesn't forget."

Chester is at his townhouse in suburban northwest Baltimore and he is laying down the line to "Brown Sugar" on his Fender bass. Ray Jr., age two, is wandering around in a rabbit mask and Chester's daughters, Sheryl, eight, and Shellie, four, are pouring out their Halloween goodies on the rug. Chester's attractive wife, Sharon, looks on with amused detachment.

Chester hands me the big bass and I play the bass line for "Day Tripper."

"That sounds great," he says.

"Uh-uh," says Raymond Jr., holding up his hands to his father's lap.

Chester lifts the boy to his knee and takes off the rabbit mask. The boy takes

it back and puts it on his father's face.

"You know," Chester says, flipping the mask up off his face, "the way the game is getting more and more violent, well, that is all the more reason for me to quit. I've already decided that after next year, I'm going to get out. People all say to me, 'You're at your peak. You could play three or four more years.' But there is so much more I want to do. We have our house out in Oakland, our business, my inner city work, my bass playing. I might even invest in a studio and make records. There is so much more to life. The importance of being a whole person.

"You know," Chester says, "I've got this garden out in Oakland, and my wife and I get out there, and we work at it. . . . When I first saw I could make it grow, I was tremendously excited. I planted the stuff and it grew. Now I get as much pleasure from that as anything

I've done in a long time."

He's beaming, and one can feel that exuberance, that insatiable cheerfulness and eagerness for more life, which is Chester's real gift.

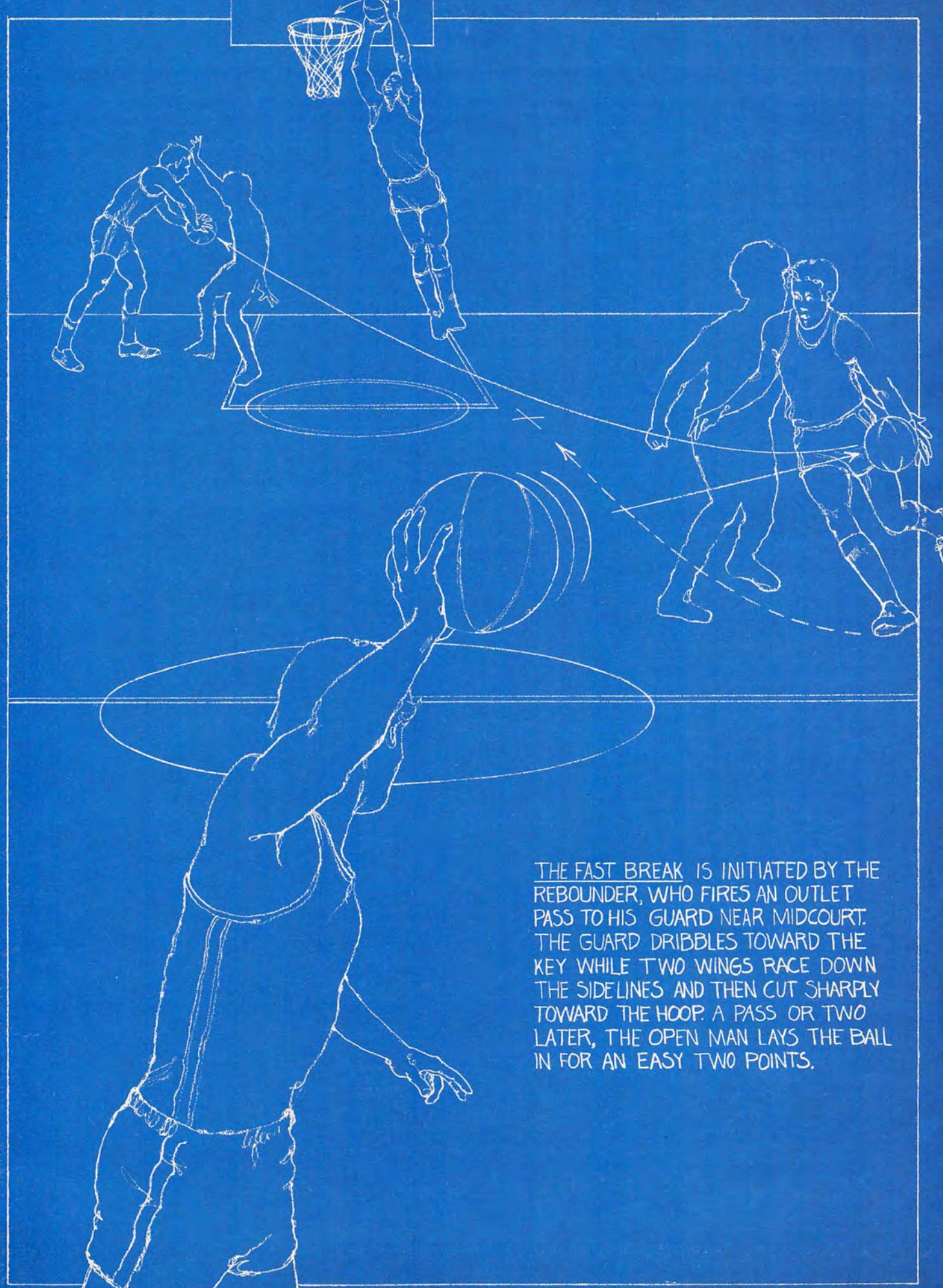
"You know," he says, laughing as Ray Jr. flips down the bunny mask over his father's face again, "coach Banks used to say to us, 'Wherever you go, no matter how high, there is always gonna be somebody more handsome than you, or stronger than you, or richer than you, so you got to learn to be happy right now with what you got.' "

I look over at the big smiling rabbit in front of me bouncing the small child on his knee. "Hey," Chester says, "show me the bass line to 'Day Tripper.' I'm going to learn that thing before you leave here tonight."

I show him, then hand him the bass, and in a few minutes he's picked it right up. And is laying it right down. ■



Chester, who never forgets his roots, here chats with his godfather, Leroy Powers (left), and old friend Clarence Logan.



THE FAST BREAK IS INITIATED BY THE REBOUNDER, WHO FIRES AN OUTLET PASS TO HIS GUARD NEAR MIDCOURT. THE GUARD DRIBBLES TOWARD THE KEY WHILE TWO WINGS RACE DOWN THE SIDELINES AND THEN CUT SHARPLY TOWARD THE HOOP. A PASS OR TWO LATER, THE OPEN MAN LAYS THE BALL IN FOR AN EASY TWO POINTS.

A fan's guide to pro basketball

The game is so fast and the offenses and defenses so complex that we follow the bouncing ball and miss 90 percent of what's really going on in the NBA. Here—in the first of a three-part series—the author helps us understand the breakneck chess matches the top teams play

by CHARLEY ROSEN

With 29 seconds left in the game and the Los Angeles Lakers leading 97-96, coach Jack Ramsay of the visiting Portland Trail Blazers called a timeout. It was game two of last season's Western Conference playoffs, and Portland had won game one. The television camera moved into the Blazers' team huddle, zoomed in on a miniature basketball court that Ramsay was holding, and we watched Ramsay's lean fingers move magnetic chips through some mysterious play he wanted the Blazers to execute. After a beer commercial, we saw Herm Gilliam inbound the ball to Lionel Hollins, who took two dribbles and lobbed a high pass to Bill Walton at the foul line. The camera moved in and framed Walton.

"Mountain Man has the ball," said the play-by-hype announcer. "Twenty seconds left. Nineteen. The clock is counting down." The Forum fans were screaming but Walton calmly clamped the ball at chest level and protected it by flashing his elbows. "Thirteen," said the announcer, his voice rising. "Twelve." Walton waited a few more beats, then turned and threw a perfect bounce pass offstage left. Suddenly the camera showed Gilliam all alone, a mere ten feet from the basket. He banked a jump shot off the backboard and through the hoop, and the Blazers owned a two-game lead.

It was an exciting finish. But TV missed the important part. Where did Gilliam come from? Why wasn't anybody guarding him?

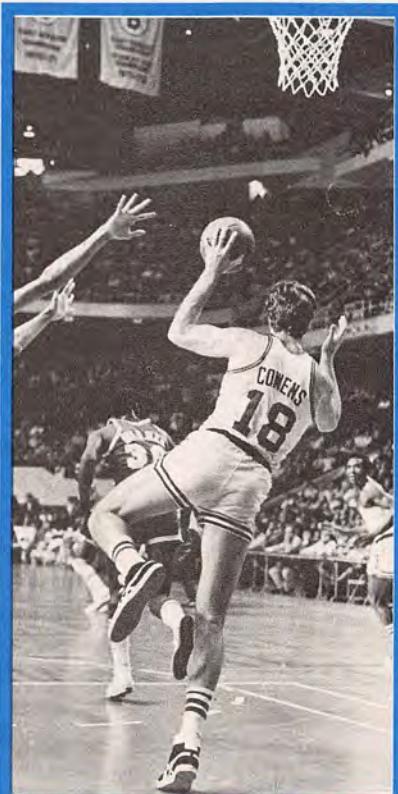
It's easy to blame TV, but most fans in the stands probably couldn't answer those questions either. We have been trained to follow the bouncing ball, and

we, therefore, miss about 90 percent of every National Basketball Association game. We do not see enough to rate a player's performance accurately, or to understand the "chess game" both coaches are playing. Nor can we convincingly indulge ourselves in the fan's most cherished prerogative—second-guessing the coach.

With ten players and only one ball, the average player (even if he plays the entire 48 minutes) has the ball only 4.8 minutes a game. It's no trick to see what a player does when he has possession of the ball. But what's he doing when he's off-camera?

TV cameras always focus on the ball and seldom show wide-angle shots. "I've spoken to the network people many times," says center Dave Cowens of the Boston Celtics. "They claim that fans want to see the ball and closeups of the players. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. Kids are always ball-conscious and things like dribbling, shooting and passing offer immediate gratification. Basketball should be fun when you're young. The other parts of the game are strictly for the serious players and the serious fans."

A serious basketball game is divided



A Dave Cowens' rebound and outlet pass to Jo Jo White often starts the Boston Celtics' famous fast break.

into three elements: Offense, defense and transition—the moments between offense and defense. "There's much more to offense than shooting," says recently retired forward-guard Mike Riordan. "Putting the ball through the hoop is actually the easiest skill to learn and perfect." When Riordan was a 12th-round draft pick of the New York Knicks in 1968, his jump shot was a brick. "Being a poor shooter was a blessing in disguise," says Riordan. "I was forced to compensate and I learned to play without the ball." Riordan worked and hustled and lasted nine years in the NBA.

If television has glorified shooting, it has canonized the dunk shot. Last year's halftime slam-dunk carnivals were aimed at turning the dunk shot into a touchdown. "The dunk shot is great," says the Celtics' general manager, Red Auerbach. "It showcases the grace, power and imagination of the players. But it's all false stimulation. Only the media and the crowd get a boost. The real name of the game is to put asses in seats. Some players may think that the dunk shot has some insult value, but most of them realize that no matter how it goes in, all you get is two points."

The ballplayers confess that they play more for each other than they do for the fans. "Once you've been around the league for a while," says the Knicks' Butch Beard, "you learn that it all comes down to pride and self-respect. The players know who the *real* players are." As for insult value of the dunk, even the most seasoned NBA veteran would gladly pay to see the Houston Rockets' 5-foot-9 Calvin Murphy throw one down on Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Though a dunk shot can certainly charge a hometown crowd and perhaps intimidate an official, a crowd that lives by the dunk also dies by it. The dunk shot can also be habit-forming and hazardous to a player's career. At age 21, Darryl Dawkins of the Philadelphia 76ers has the talent and the time to become the ultimate NBA center. But it's easier for Dawkins to pick up media strokes by performing his "Gorilla Dunks" than it is to try and stretch out his talent.

If the media can sandbag the development of a young ballplayer, it can also make him fantastically rich. Newsprint, interviews and prime-time film clips bring a player recognition, which his agent can turn into a megadollar contract. Most players cultivate their relationships with important media people.

Announcers, reporters and sponsors feel that nothing is as safe as a percentage, and nothing as objective as a num-

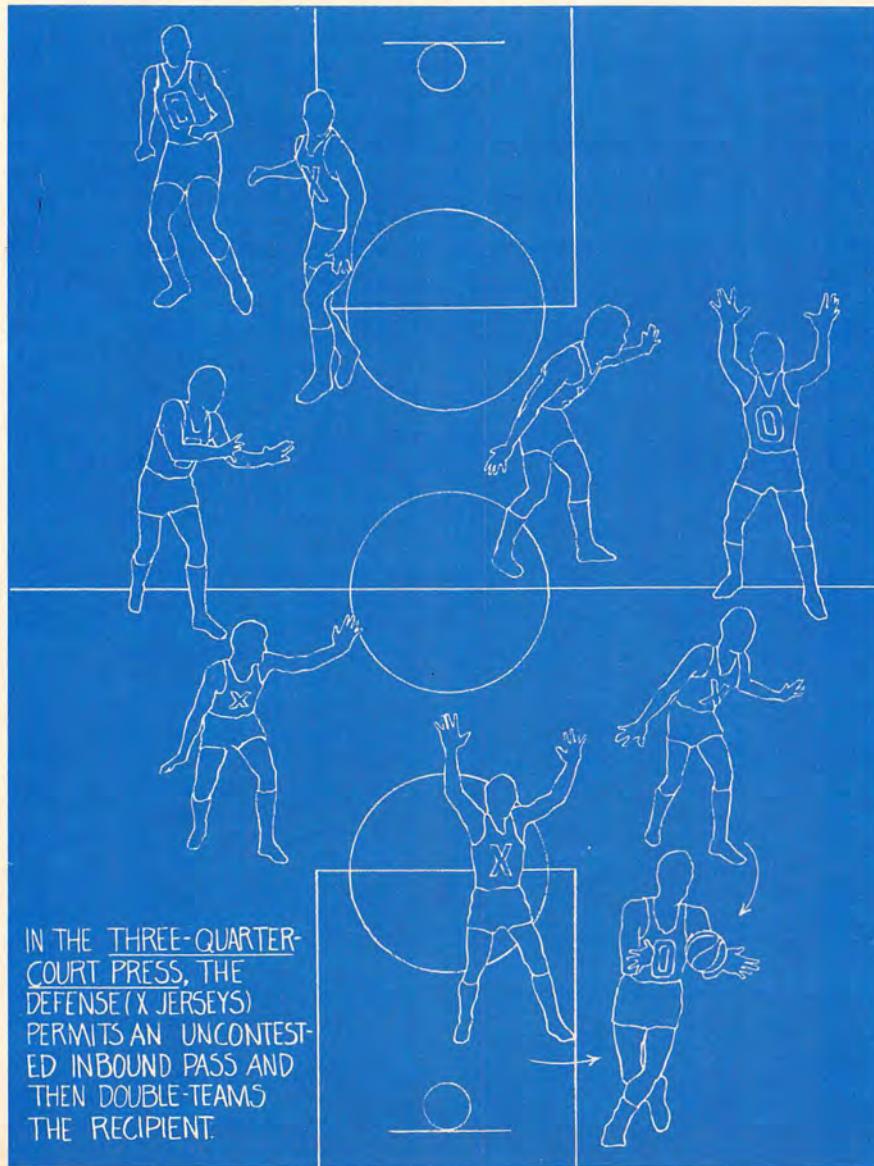
Fan's guide

ber. So a pedigree of impressive statistics is usually sufficient to bring any player the title of "superstar." But the NBA doesn't record "picks," "cuts to the basket," "boxing out," or "defensive intimidations." Except for "games" and "minutes played," the official statistics tally only what happens when a player comes in contact with the ball—shots, rebounds, assists, turnovers, steals, etc. The only relevant number, of course, is the final score.

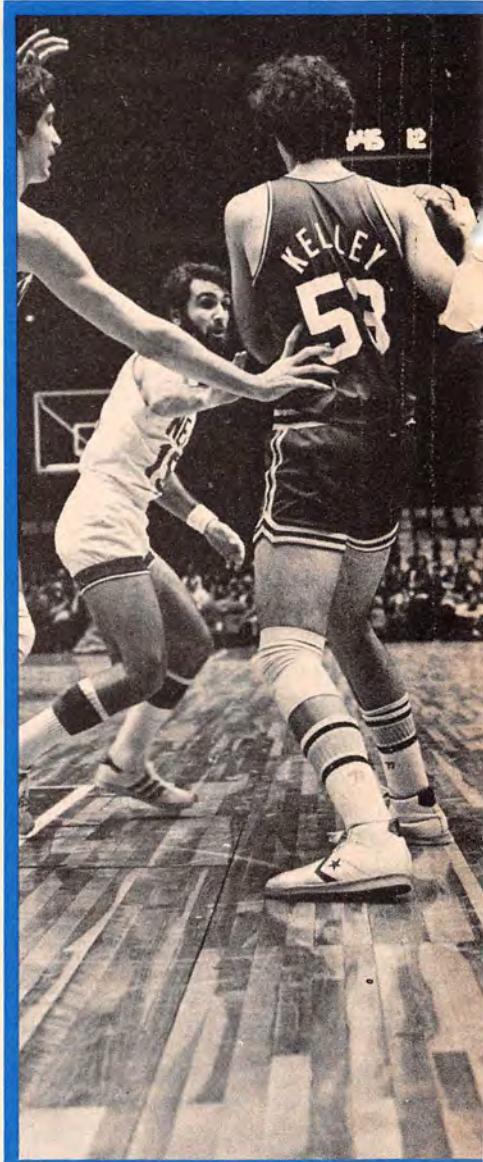
Win or lose, Auerbach swears that "NBA statistics are a total fraud." When Ernie DiGregorio was the White Hope of the Buffalo Braves, the hometown scorer seemed to present him with an assist practically every time he touched the ball. "White players get extra assists and extra rebounds," says an NBA veteran who insists on remaining anonymous. "The officials also protect white guys so they get to shoot a lot more foul shots than they deserve. If

you sneeze near Gail Goodrich, they'll whistle you down and send him to the line." Black players can also benefit. When the Washington Bullets hosted the New Orleans Jazz in the last game of the 1974-75 season, Wes Unseld needed 30 rebounds to win the league rebounding title. Unseld's total that night was puffed up with tips, taps and deflections, and he finished with exactly 30 rebounds.

A field goal is always worth two points and a free throw is always one point, but there is an alternate method of scoring a ballgame. "I used to figure it this way," says Jerry Sloan, now an assistant coach of the Chicago Bulls. "My aim was to get eight rebounds, draw four offensive fouls and pick up three loose balls each game. If I was successful, that's 15 times I gave my team possession of the ball. In the NBA, each possession averages out to 1.1 points. So without even taking a shot, I could



IN THE THREE-QUARTER-COURT PRESS, THE DEFENSE (X JERSEYS) PERMITS AN UNCONTESTED INBOUND PASS AND THEN DOUBLE-TEAMs THE RECIPIENT.



After catching an inbound pass, Rich Kelley of New Orleans must fight off a double-team by the pressing Nets.

contribute 16 points to the ballclub."

If the media and the stat sheet are both misleading, the NBA's referees are also making the game difficult to follow. "The pace today is too fast for even two perfect officials to work a good game," says feisty Dick Motta, the Bullets' coach. "Most NBA officials are simply out of shape and too short. Only one or two are over six feet. How can they possibly see around a guy as wide as Darryl Dawkins? They can't get good angles on a play so they have to guess."

Officiating is supposed to be reaction, not anticipation. Trying to predict the future is always risky, and the players are caught in the middle. "Refs in the NBA," says the Rockets' Calvin Murphy, "have their minds fixed on what a player's capabilities are as they see it."

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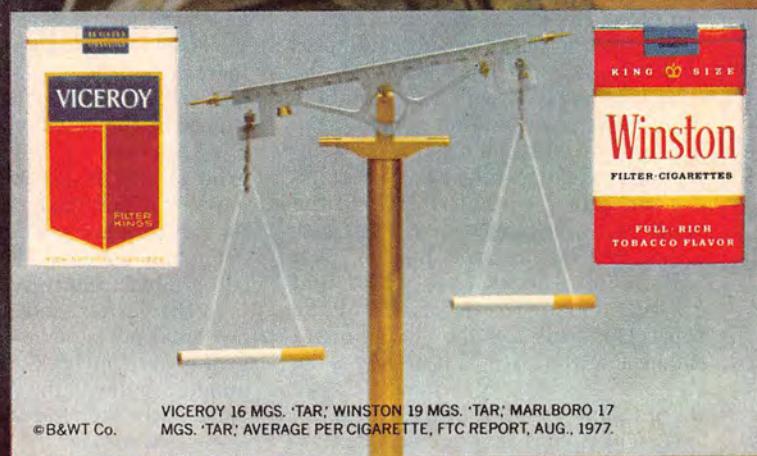
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MGS. 'TAR'; AVERAGE PER CIGARETTE, FTC REPORT, AUG., 1977.

Fan's guide

They think in categories. If I block a shot they automatically call it goaltending, because they say to themselves, 'If this guy is only 5-9 he has no business blocking a shot. He must have goaltended.' I also brought a lot of offensive moves into the league—moves that I worked very hard at perfecting. But the refs weren't ready for them. They figured I had gotten by my opponent so easily that I must have taken an extra step."

Professional basketball is just too fast to be measured, regulated and understood on the run. Even commissioner Larry O'Brien doesn't know where the action is. "Videotapes have shown," said O'Brien, "that [Milwaukee Buck] Kent Benson elbowed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar before Abdul-Jabbar punched Benson's face. Benson's elbowing violation escaped detection by the referees because the violation took place far from the ball and therefore far away from the action of the game." The only way to truly fathom the game is to persistently keep an eye on play away from the ball, because few fans even begin to comprehend what kind of offense or defense teams are playing.

There are several different manners of team offense in the NBA, each having its own purpose and methodology. The fast-break offense is based on the belief that layups are easier to make than jump shots. The Denver Nuggets, Buffalo Braves, San Antonio Spurs, Portland Trail Blazers and Boston Celtics are fast-breaking teams. Under coach Willis Reed, the New York Knicks are striving to become one.

The fast break starts with a defensive rebound, so a breaking team's first priority is to control the boards. Most teams rely on two rebounders (Maurice Lucas and Bill Walton on Portland, for example) and send three men out on the break. Teams with a superior rebounding center (like Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain or Nate Thurmond) can release four men downcourt. But the classic fast break is still a 3-on-2 situation:

Bill Walton snags the rebound, turns toward the near sideline and initiates the Blazers' fast break with a 20-foot, line-drive chest pass. Walton is one of the masters of basketball's single most important pass—the outlet pass. His delivery hits guard Lionel Hollins in the hands just as Hollins crosses the mid-court line. Hollins, the Blazers' best ballhandler, veers in slightly and dribbles closer to the center of the court. Hollins is now the "triggerman" and he aims the fast break straight at the basket so that both sides of the court are within easy passing range. Running abreast of Hollins are the "wingmen"—

guard Johnny Davis and swift forward Bobby Gross.

Hollins reaches the top of the key and the wingmen hug the sidelines. As soon as Davis and Gross reach the foul line extended, they explode toward the hoop. The outmanned defensive tandem replies with a 1-1 stack zone, one man in front of the other. The top man defends Hollins to a halt just above the foul line, and the back man hustles to cover Hollins' snappy bounce pass to Davis. Since Davis is now covered, he sails a perfect pass to Gross and the fast break is consummated with a ram-slam-in-your-mother's-eyes dunk shot.

There are several species of fast breaks. The Denver Nuggets launch a relay of four sprinters on the break—Bob Wilkerson, Bobby Jones, Brian Taylor and David Thompson. The Buffalo Braves' running game is headed by mercurial guard Randy Smith, and the Braves like to get forward Billy Knight involved near the basket before the defense gets back. The Portland Trail Blazers run a normal three-man break,

Tommy Heinsohn, "the only offensive play I taught all year was a five-man, 24-second-long fast break. The players thought I was undercoaching, but the fast break is all the offense a team really needs. And it's a mother to play against. The other team gets so apprehensive about getting back on defense that they rush their own offense. The break puts the pressure on from buzzer to buzzer." Fast-break teams can exhaust their opponents. "We want the other team to play their ninth and tenth men," says Heinsohn. "This has to reduce their efficiency. But it's also why fast-break teams take a long time to build."

Ballclubs that play pattern offenses can usually get along with only seven seasoned players. A pattern team will work the ball much more carefully and take fewer chances than a fast-break team. A pattern team will force every defensive player into at least three or four picks on every play and make him play defense for the full 24 seconds. This is designed to cause the defender to make mistakes, lose his concentration and perhaps even lose his desire to play defense. If a defender accepts one pick, or turns his head just once to follow the ball, then *zap!* The right man has the ball in the right place at the right time and the offense rings up two easy points.

The Chicago Bulls, New Jersey Nets, Washington Bullets, Los Angeles Lakers and Phoenix Suns are pattern-oriented teams. But the championship Knicks (1970 and 1973) of the Bill Bradley-Dave DeBusschere-Willis Reed-Walt Frazier era were the epitome of a pattern ballclub. The Knicks took full advantage of whatever fast-break opportunities were available, but they ran plays 60 percent of the time. The Knicks had a repertoire of 25 to 30 plays, all of which were known throughout the league. But every game was different and no two plays were ever exactly alike. The Knicks were masters of timing, execution and adjustment. The 1973 Knicks had DeBusschere (a forward) and Jerry Lucas (a center) playing out on the offensive perimeter and shooting 30-foot bombs. This stunned the league's big men and lured them far outside their natural defensive environment. The Knicks then completed the switch by having their guards, Frazier and Earl Monroe, play inside. "You need mature players to play a successful pattern offense," says Bill Fitch, coach of the Cleveland Cavaliers. "Players who have faith in each other and who can play with patience."

Most fast-break coaches, however, think very little of pattern offenses. "Patterns are simply a crutch in place of fast breaks," says Kansas City coach Phil Johnson. "They are used so that a

Celtics coach Tommy Heinsohn: "The fast break is a mother to play against"

and San Antonio's break is a harum-scarum affair. The Spurs run everybody but their hefty center, Billy Paultz, and 15-footers are as good as layups. The Boston Celtics' fast break features all five men hitting the defensive boards and all five men running full-tilt downcourt. The Celtics feel that a 5-on-4 advantage is just as effective as any other, and that it is easier to come by. The Celtics' philosophy demands that their big men run constantly, a rare event in the NBA.

The fast break can be an offense unto itself. If no shot materializes immediately, the wings continue on along the baseline and exchange sides. This opens the lanes for the two trailing big men. If there are still no open shots, most teams will try and exploit any mismatches caused by the initial offensive overload. Even after the entire defense has recovered and is in position, there's invariably a guard defending a forward, a forward defending a center, or a center defending nobody. These "situations" can produce relatively easy shots.

In the Celtics' scheme of things, the fast break never ends. The forwards and guards are forever flowing through the foul line, going to the basket and setting picks away from the ball. "When Cowens was a rookie," says Boston coach

team can get a good shot every time down the court. Patterns are also used to make players do the things on offense that they should be doing naturally, like cutting to the basket and picking away from the ball. Patterns also insure good court balance and prevent point-hungry players from hanging around the ball. But pattern teams demand a lot of discipline, and they allow the defense too much time to set up." According to Heinsohn, pattern offenses stifle creativity. "The ballplayers would much rather run," he says.

There are other NBA teams whose offense begins with a fast break or a pattern, but usually winds down into a one-on-one confrontation. Teams like the Philadelphia 76ers, the Seattle SuperSonics and the New Orleans Jazz are offensively interested in isolating superstars on their favorite areas of the court. But no matter how superb the superstar, a one-on-one offense is the easiest to contain. "The other four guys stand around and watch the ball," says Phil Jackson of the Knicks. "They become almost useless and the defense can collapse around the ball. The more players a team involves in its offense, the harder the team is to defend."

A ballclub's offense always determines the shape of its defense. Fast-break teams want to accelerate the game tempo; pattern clubs want to slow the pace. Fast-break teams use aggressive defenses, usually some kind of press. Fullcourt presses attack the inbound pass. Three-quarter-court presses permit the inbound pass and then double-team the recipient. Half-court presses utilize the midcourt line as a sixth defender. And there are zone presses and man-to-man presses. "Off the record," says a veteran NBA coach, "we always use a zone press against black ballhandlers and a man-to-man press against white players. The white kids are usually better coached in high school and college and can handle pressure defenses better than black kids." A press is also used when a team is being routed and needs a successful gamble to get back into the ballgame.

When the press is turned on, the game blasts into overdrive. A press fosters quick thinking, instant decisions and nervous passes. Even if the press compels no turnovers, the additional pressure makes an offense sweat just to bring the ball upcourt. The more time a pattern team needs to set up its offense, the more it has to hurry its plays. After 18 to 20 seconds without a shot, even the most accomplished pattern teams are forced to go one-on-one. The Knicks consistently go to Monroe, Washington to Elvin Hayes and Golden

State to Rick Barry.

When fast-break teams play each other, there's rarely any time or need for a press. A running ballgame can be a living whirlwind of thundering stallions, jumping dolphins and darting-lizard grace. But nothing can dull a good running game faster than a high turnover count. The running game can get sloppy and its brilliance erratic whenever the players are jet-lagged or careless.

The best way to slow down a running team is to get the big men back quickly on defense. On Red Holzman's flip-flop Knickerbocker teams, DeBusschere and Lucas were always just a few steps away from making the conversion from offense to defense. "The break is over when the big men get back," Heinsohn says. "The big men can block shots and crumple bodies. So now the best thing you've got left is a jump shot." Another way to cramp a running team is to have your big men crash the offensive boards. The outlet pass is delayed and often stalled when every rebound is fiercely contested.

Pattern teams like the Cleveland Cavaliers will play a much more passive defense, usually some kind of zone—where players guard areas of the court instead of each other. The zone defense packs the foul lane with large people. It prohibits penetration and forbids layups. A zone relinquishes only the outside shot, forcing opponents to shoot from 20-25 feet. The zone defense, of course, is illegal in the NBA. "It's a zone," says John Nucatola, onetime supervisor of NBA officials, "if a defensive player plays more than eight feet away from his man, and if the same defensive player remains in the three-second lane for more than three seconds." What Nucatola means is that there are several kinds of "position defenses" in the NBA, but no "zones." Heinsohn laughs at the suggestion. "The Atlanta Hawks play a very radical defense," Heinsohn rasps. "A two-one-two zone. The same kind that's used by every high school team in the country."

The most common NBA zone is a 2-3 formation in which the guards play a switching man-to-man and the three big men a straight zone. Most zones try to nudge the offense toward one side of the court and then trap the ball in the corner. The Chicago Bulls are particularly adept at cutting the court in half, and guard Norm Van Lier makes a living lingering near the top of the key and intercepting any attempts to reverse the ball to the other side of the court.

With a dynamic big man at its hub, a defense can afford to play a "funnel" zone. This variation overplays to the outside, denies the pass to the corners and keeps the middle wide open. The

idea is to force the offense into the jaws of a Bill Russell, Clifford Ray or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Faster than you can say, "Back in your face, chump!" an offense is blocked and intimidated.

Every ballclub in the league employs some form of zone defense against a one-on-one offense. "Dribbling against a good zone," says Heinsohn, "is like playing against a bunch of gigantic spiders. But quick sharp passes can beat a zone. There's no man alive who ever outran a good pass. The absolutely best way to beat a zone is to get the ball the hell upcourt before the zone has a chance to organize."

Any game matching a break-press team against a pattern-zone team is always a test of character. Games of this nature are played in spurts as each team temporarily succeeds in establishing its own rhythm. "The team that wants it more will win," says Phil Jackson. "The team that believes more in its own purpose."

The game is always deliberate when two pattern teams bang heads. Each team tries to bully and/or fox the other out of its patterns and into one-on-one situations. Since neither team is running, layups can usually be earned only off the offensive boards and play is apt to be brutal and low-scoring. Pattern-zone teams will rarely blow out an opponent the way fast-break teams can, but Red Auerbach cautions that comparative scores mean nothing. "You win by one point," says Auerbach, "or you win by 30. What's the difference? They all count the same."

"Transition" basketball is the explosive, reverse-direction movement between offense and defense and offense. "When the Celtics scout the colleges," says Heinsohn, "that's where we look

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Fan's guide



In NBA wars, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar represents might at the end of the funnel.

to find a player's heart." The easiest transition is from defense to offense: A quick turnover, a steal or a basket. An experienced player can sometimes anticipate the change of fortune and cheat a few steps downcourt. This can give a fast-break team a huge advantage.

The most challenging transition is from offense to defense. The guards are tempted to loiter on the offensive perimeter, hoping for an interception and an easy hoop. The big men will jerk to a halt before executing a sighing, rolling pivot before loping back on defense. A few teams require the big man to stay put and pressure the outlet pass—the Bullets sometimes demand this of Elvin Hayes—but the primary responsibility on the offense-to-defense transition is hustling downcourt. "There's no skill involved in getting back on defense," says Portland's Bob Gross. "You just need a willingness to do it. There are a lot of guys who get caught under the basket and make no effort to get downcourt at all. Most of these guys are only interested in scoring points and they're always looking to save themselves for offense."

Gross surprised many NBA watchers with his brilliant performance against Julius Erving in the 1977 championship series. Gross shot 67 percent from the field and did a highly respectable job of containing Doctor J. "Erving is an incredible ballplayer," says Gross. "But

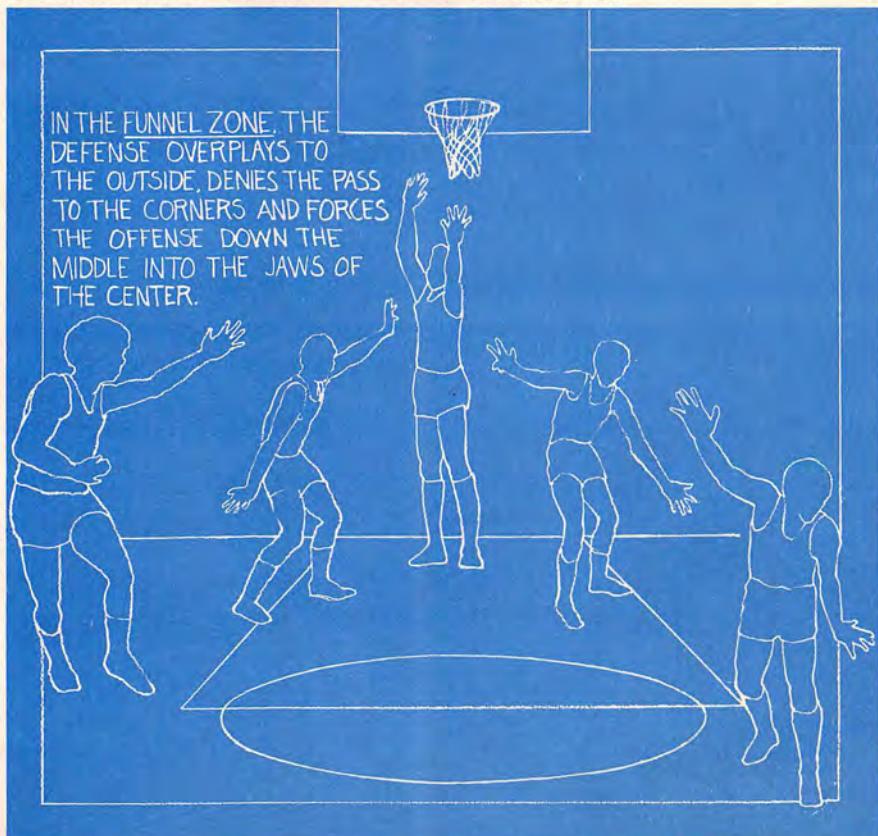
he had to bear the burden of the 76ers' entire offense. We tried to make him pay at the other end, especially during the offense-to-defense transition. That's

why most of my shots were either fast-break layups or wide-open 15-footers."

There are 242 ballplayers in the NBA. They range in size from 5-8 Charlie Criss of the Atlanta Hawks to the KC Kings' 7-4 Tom Burleson. Early in the 1977-78 season, Criss and Burleson had nearly identical totals of points scored, minutes played, steals and turnovers. Which player is better? Can they be compared? Is Jabbar really better than Walton? How can such evaluations be made? By looking off the ball and seeing what they're supposed to be doing.

On the surface, there are only three positions in basketball—guard, forward and center. But there are small guards, big guards, penetrating guards, shooting guards and defensive guards. There are centers who face the basket and centers who play with their backs to the hoop. There are small forwards, inside forwards, outside forwards and swing forwards. There are even backwards forwards. A player's role depends on his size, his abilities, his attitude and his coach. But all roles are interdependent and all roles are equally important to a winning team effort.

Next month, we'll examine the function of guards and small forwards—and point out which of them are overrated, which are underrated, and why, for example, a panel of experts feels Jim Clemons is a better all-round guard than Pete Maravich. ■



The NHL scramble to catch

The Swedish Express



Anders Hedberg, who scored 83 goals for the WHA's Winnipeg Jets last season, can't be legally signed by NHL teams until the end of this season. But several teams have already begun trying to flag down the swift rightwinger

Anders Hedberg, who just might be the greatest hockey player in North America, if not the world, says he'll meet me in the dressing room after the game tonight when we'll decide a time and place for an interview. The game starts at eight o'clock, Hedberg's Winnipeg Jets against the Houston Aeros of the World Hockey Association. It's now 3:15 p.m. I'm heading out of the hotel for an appointment with Hedberg's lawyer, Don Baizley, when I spot a familiar figure standing near the newsstand reading a newspaper. The Cat. Or is it The Cat? The Cat isn't the easiest person to spot across a crowded lobby. He's only 5-foot-7 and very skinny. He wears nondescript suits and ties, has a bland face and a haircut that can only be described as modern mixing bowl. Here, in Winnipeg, the heart of the Canadian Midwest, a lot of people look like The Cat.

"Hey, Cat!" I shout.

He doesn't look up. I start toward him and, looking up from the paper, his eyes widen, his mouth drops and he hurries away. I call again, but he ducks into an elevator just as the doors close.

Right away, I'm excited. My heart pounds. The Cat is Emile "The Cat" Francis, general manager of the St. Louis Blues of the National Hockey League, and, if it is, indeed, The Cat, I may be on the verge of exposing as fact what has been the hottest rumor in hockey—The Great Swedish Superstars Chase, the sneakiest, most secret operation since the Allies went ashore at Normandy.

The Great Swedish Superstars Chase, the grapevine has it, began last October 21, the day the NHL, fearing possible lawsuits, did away with its protected lists. Two of the most coveted players on the protected lists were the Swedes, Anders Hedberg and Ulf Nilsson of the Winnipeg Jets. Hedberg's NHL playing rights had belonged to Toronto, Nilsson's to Buffalo. Both clubs had tried to sign them in the past. Both

had failed. Hedberg and Nilsson stayed in Winnipeg, the WHA team with whom they had signed as rookies in 1974-75. Hedberg and Nilsson like Winnipeg and they like the WHA. But they like the NHL too. The challenge. The prestige. So, when they negotiated identical five-year contracts at an estimated \$160,000 a year in the fall of 1975, they demanded, and were given, clauses that would allow them—should the NHL and WHA not merge in the meantime—to entertain offers from the NHL after the current season. Naturally, at the time that meant Toronto and Buffalo again. But if the Jets came within \$20,000 of any offer, Hedberg and Nilsson promised to stay in Winnipeg through the term of their contract.

But with the protected lists now wiped out, Hedberg and Nilsson will be free at the end of this season to negotiate with any and all clubs in the NHL. Hedberg and Nilsson have made only one stipulation: They must play on the same team. That doesn't bother the NHL clubs interested in Anders Hedberg, the prize catch.

Hedberg is 26, a lanky 5-11, 176-pound rightwinger with a lefthanded shot, who was the WHA Rookie of the Year in 1974-75 and a WHA All-Star in each of his three seasons. In those seasons he scored 53, 50 and 70 goals. With 13 goals in last spring's WHA playoffs, Hedberg totaled 83 goals last season—eclipsing the record of 80 set by the Philadelphia Flyers' Reggie Leach in 1975-76. Also shattered was one of the game's most sacred records: The fastest 50 goals in a season. Canadian Maurice Richard had 50 over the 50-game season in 1944-45, and Bobby Hull, Hedberg's linemate at Winnipeg, tied the mark in 1974-75. Hedberg fired 51 goals in his first 47 games last season.

Hedberg is nicknamed the Swedish Express for his speed, and it is said that he's the fastest skater in the world and that his acceleration from a standing start to full speed is the fastest in hockey. Experts also say his wrist shot is the best in hockey: Hard, quick and accurate. With Hull on left wing and Nilsson at center, Hedberg freewheels in the fashion of European hockey, weaving patterns that dizzy the opposition and delight the fans. They say no player is more adept at taking or making a pass while in full flight.

"Anders Hedberg," says former NHL player Billy Harris, who coached him for a year with Sweden's national team, "is a visual feast. The best. It's a shame the fans in NHL cities can't get to see this great hockey player."

As far as numerous NHL clubs are concerned, the fans will. Legally, of course, these clubs must wait until the end of this season before moving in. But, rumor has it, every team is not waiting till then. They'd like a com-

mitment. Hedberg and Nilsson could be the difference between making the playoffs next season and not, between success at the gate and failure.

Don Cherry, coach of the Boston Bruins, says: "Playing Hedberg in the WHA is like running Secretariat at the county fair." Boston is said to be very interested in the Swedes. Even more interested, reportedly, is St. Louis. The Blues have already acquired Toronto leftwinger Inge Hammarstrom, another Swede and a good friend of Hedberg's. Hedberg, Nilsson and Hammarstrom: Potentially a very explosive line. That could explain Cat Francis' presence in the hotel lobby, if that was he.

Attorney Don Baizley, seated in his office, has been representing Hedberg and Nilsson since their first year here. He says they were originally scouted by Dr. Gerry Wilson, the Jets' team physician who is a Winnipeg orthopedic surgeon. Wilson was in Stockholm for a year's research into sports medicine, and met Hedberg, then a university student and a member of the Swedish national team. Wilson got to know Hedberg and, after seeing him and Ulf Nilsson in several hockey games, the doctor phoned Don Baizley, an old friend, in February, 1974.

"The Swedes told Gerry they'd like to play in Canada," says Baizley. "Wilson called me and said they were great. He said Hedberg was as great a player as he's ever seen. I said, 'Ever seen?' He said yes. I said, 'Gerry, get a grip on yourself.' Baizley flew to the world championships in Helsinki and concluded that Wilson was right. But before Baizley would commit Hedberg and Nilsson to the Jets, he got in touch with Toronto and Buffalo, which held their respective playing rights in the NHL. "I only felt it was fair to do this," says Baizley. "It was in their best interests to hear all offers."

"Toronto made an offer that was actually more than Winnipeg's," says Baizley. "Buffalo's offer to Nilsson was a shade less but the big factor was that the boys wanted to play on the same team. In the NHL, they could not do that. Toronto wasn't about to give Buffalo Hedberg and Buffalo wasn't about to give Toronto Nilsson. However, in Winnipeg they could play together."

Baizley says another big selling factor was the prospect of being able to play with Bobby Hull, their idol. That May, Hedberg and Nilsson signed one-year contracts to play for Winnipeg at an estimated \$80,000 each. That first season in Winnipeg was rough for them.

"The goons were out in force," says Baizley. "It was sickening. Sometimes I don't know how they put up with the dirty play. But they knew it was going to happen and they were mentally prepared for the worst. There was a game in

Express



San Diego when Bobby Hull called the reporters into the dressing room and said to take a look at Nilsson. It was disgusting. Nilsson's face was like hamburger. He was cut and bruised and scraped and so was Hedberg."

When their contracts expired at the end of the 1975 season, Toronto made another pitch for Hedberg. "I wanted Toronto to try and pry Nilsson loose from Buffalo," says Baizley, "but Toronto was unsure of Nilsson's abilities at that point. So the deal fell through." Baizley says the Winnipeg offer this time was better than Toronto's anyway. And he says Buffalo showed no interest in trying to sign Nilsson.

I ask Baizley if any NHL clubs have approached him about the players. He looks at me sideways. He has a disconcerting habit of looking at me sideways when he doesn't like a question. "I have, er, nothing to say on that," he says, fidgeting. "We'll weigh all offers, pick the best and go to the Jets with it before we decide."

"Rumors say you're being swamped with offers."

"Please, please, I can't say anything." He rocks in his seat, smooths his hair, which doesn't need smoothing.

"I'm told you talked to Keith Allen [general manager] of the Philadelphia Flyers."

"Earl, *please*, I can't talk about those things."

Baizley jumps up, walks around his desk and opens the door for me.

"Rumor has it Toronto—"

Baizley grabs my coat and hands it to me.

"Don," I say, heading out the door, "what's The Cat doing in town?"

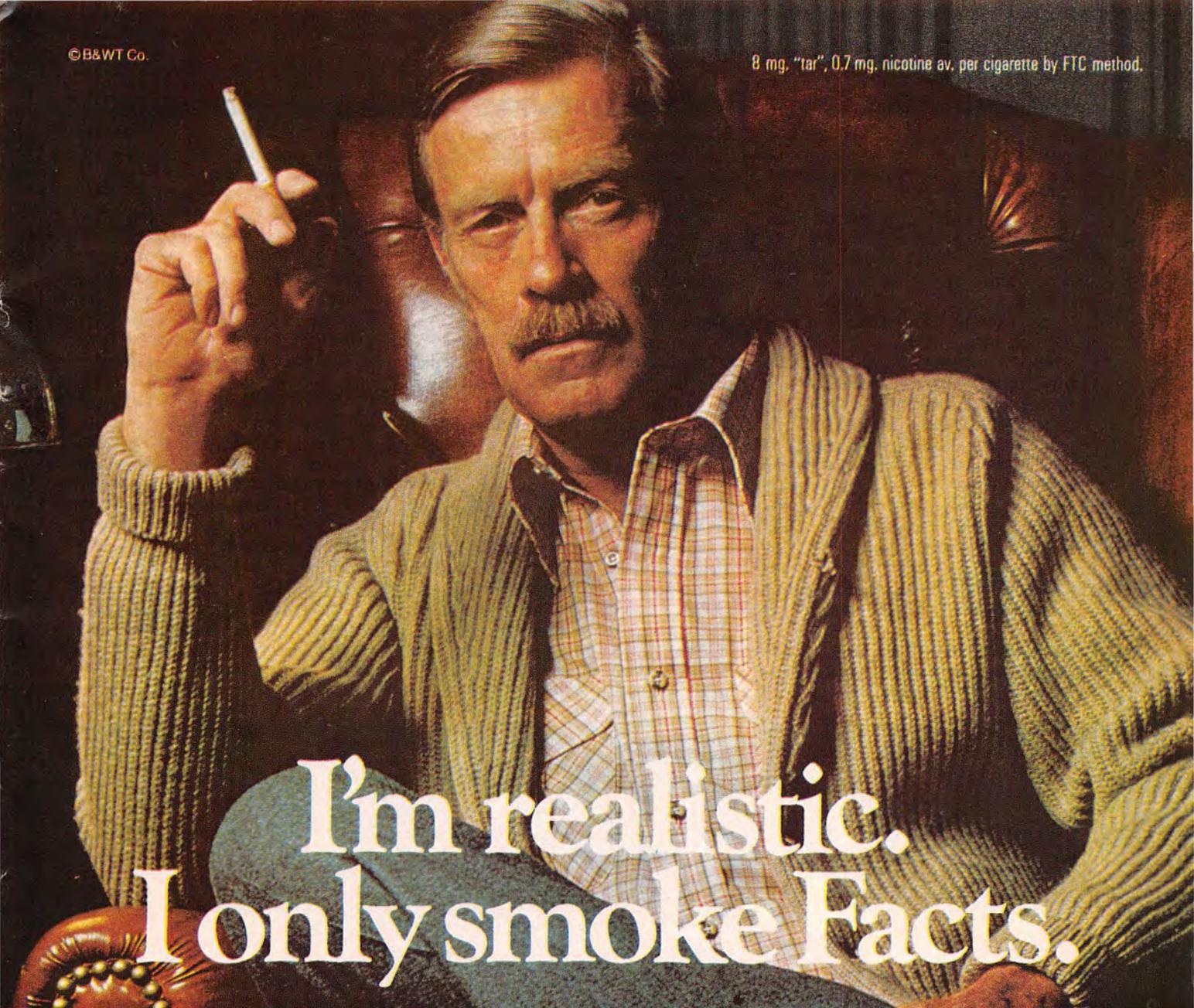
Baizley blanches. "The *who*? The Cat? I don't know what you mean. Heh, heh. Nice talking to you, Earl. Bye, bye."

"Cat Francis. He's in town, isn't he, Don? He's here to talk business, right? C'mon, Don, admit it."

"I know nothing. I have no idea. Look, don't ask me questions like that. I can't say a thing. Do you want to get me into *trouble*?" He turns and runs down the hall to the washroom, waving goodbye.

In the game, Winnipeg beats Houston 4-3. Hedberg plays well but doesn't score. He came close on a breakaway in the third period, but lost control of the puck on his backhand at the last second. For me, personally, Hedberg's amazing speed is the thing to see. At times he seems to be running on his blades, the

Buddies Hedberg and Nilsson stipulate one thing to NHL clubs seeking their services: They must play on the same team.



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skates kissing lightly over the ice, barely audible. On the breakaway he pulled away as if the defender had been mired in cement.

After the game, I'm waiting in a crowded reception area outside the dressing room when I see Rudy Pilous, general manager of the Jets, and introduce myself. "The Scandinavian players have introduced a whole new approach to our game," says Pilous. "Before it was up and down, up and down, dump it in and go chase it. If one of the players on a line breaks down, the whole system breaks down. These fellows have introduced a beautiful kind of hockey. The center is not the playmaker like the center in North American hockey is. Always there is a man in motion, always he is the playmaker. Hedberg is highly intelligent. He's innovative and deceptive. He also believes in being physically fit, which is something else you don't find North

In his first year in the WHA, Anders Hedberg was mauled by opponents. But now, he says, "The goons are gone."

American hockey players believe in. He and Nilsson have even got us started on overland training—soccer, running, calisthenics. This team is in the greatest shape of any team in professional hockey."

"Have they, uh, been approached by any NHL clubs?"

"Oh, no, no. That can't happen until the end of the season, you know."

"Do you think you will lose them?"

"I hope not. If we do, it'd be one hell of a blow to our franchise. I don't know if we could survive losing them."

"What about Cat Francis? What's he doing in town?"

"Is he here?"

"I think so, yeah."

Pilous rubs his nose. "Probably scouting Houston, then."

The dressing-room door opens and the reporters enter. Hedberg is standing in front of his locker sipping from a can of Coke. I compliment him on his game. He thanks me and smiles sheepishly. "I did not play so well," he says, then tells me he won't be able to find time for an interview until after practice in the

morning. So I go over to Bobby Hull, who is standing near the door in his green-and-black underwear. Hull looks as hard and muscular as he did 20 years ago when he broke into the NHL.

I ask about Hedberg, and Hull says, "Playing with Anders Hedberg is the best thing that ever happened to me; the same with Ulf Nilsson. These two kids have given me the most pleasure of my career. If it hadn't been for them, I would have quit playing a few years ago."

"Was it difficult to adjust to their free-wheeling style?"

"Not at all. It's something I always did myself. I always freewheeled but I never had anyone to respond to me before. But the first time we stepped on the ice as a line in practice, we clicked. Just like that. Right off, it was instinctive. It was a beautiful fantasy."

"Will they go to the NHL?"

"It's only natural they want to play with the best like, say, Boston and Montreal or whoever. They should have that chance if they wish."

"What will it mean to this fran-



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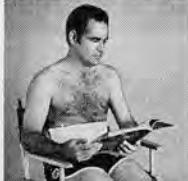
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chise?"

"I don't think it could survive their loss. I know that I'd retire. There'd be no reason for me to go on. They are the most unselfish, decent players I've ever known and you have to be decent if you're going to be great. I would like to see them be great in the NHL too, if that's their wish."

I thank Hull, then ask: "Bobby, have you seen Cat Francis around?"

He smiles. "No, but I did see Punch Imlach [general manager of the Buffalo Sabres] the other night and I know Keith Allen's in town." Hull winks devilishly.

Moments later, crossing the corridor outside the Jets' dressing room, I bump into a guy who looks at me sideways.

"Oh, hi, Earl," says Don Baizley. He laughs nervously. "Did you see Anders?" I tell him yes and then ask: "Did you see Keith Allen?" He glances left, right and steps back, holding his hands

Bobby Hull (center) says linemates Nilsson (left) and Hedberg "are the most unselfish, decent players I've ever known."

up before him. "I know nothing," he snaps, turning away. "I told you, Earl, goddamnit, you don't ask me those things."

"Rudy Pilous tells me The Cat's in town."

"Please, Earl," he shouts, walking backwards, "I can't say anything. If he is here, I don't know it. Do you understand? I don't know it."

Half an hour later, en route back to my hotel, a car pulls up beside me at a stoplight. I glance over. In the car is Hedberg. Baizley is beside him. I can't make out the figure in the backseat. But when the light changes and the car pulls away, the street lights illuminate the back of the man's head. It's a little guy with a haircut that I would describe as modern mixing bowl.

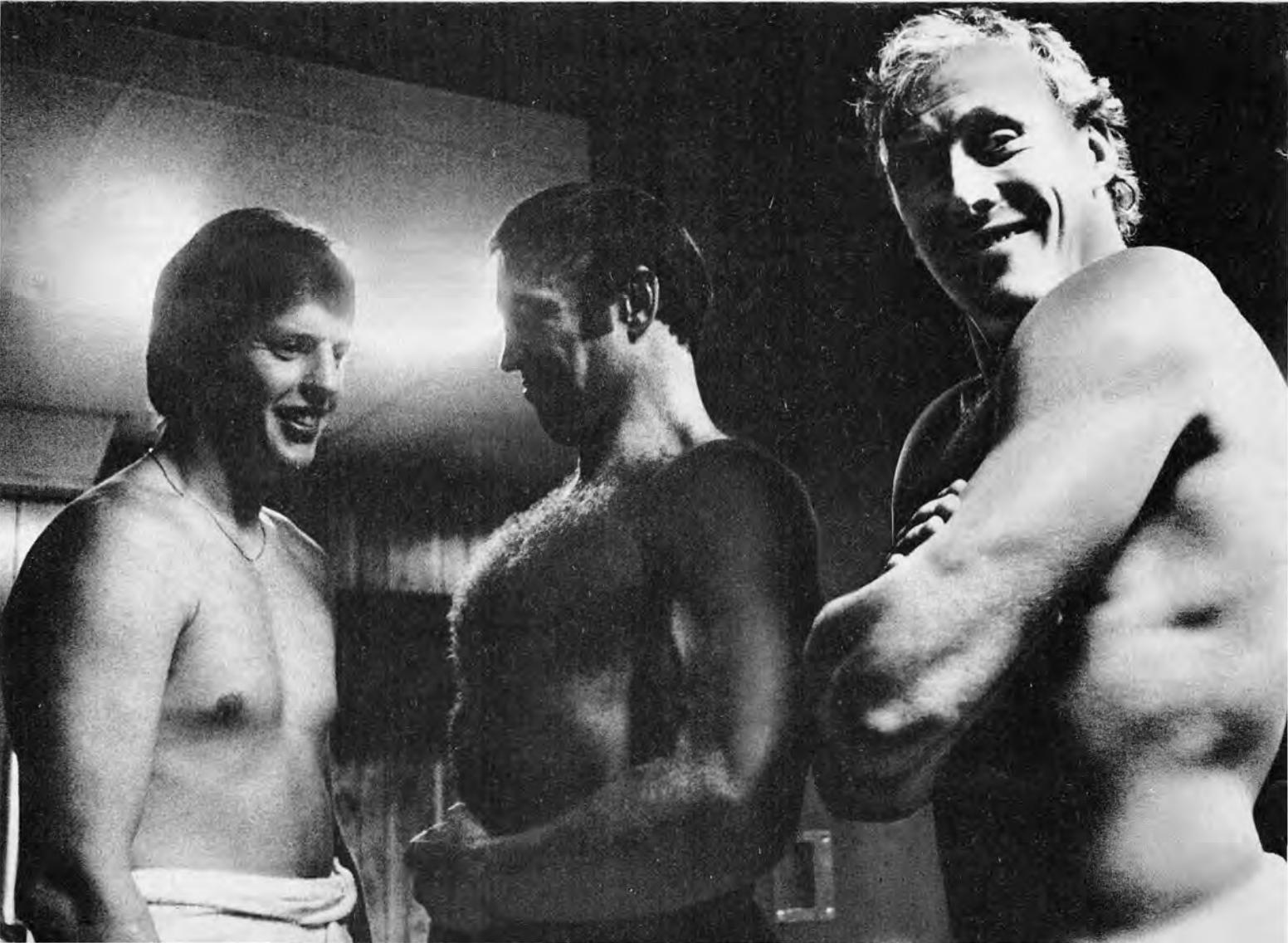
The next morning after practice, Hedberg wheels his 1977 Grand Prix through the streets of Winnipeg, heading for his two-story \$80,000 home where he lives with his Swedish girlfriend, Gun-Marie, and a German shepherd named Doc. Hedberg seems distracted. "How long

do you think this will take?" he asks with an anxious chuckle. It's now 12:15 p.m. "Oh, about two hours," I say. "Until maybe two o'clock?" he asks. "Yes," I say. He nods and smiles. "That's fine then," he says, "because I, uh, have some important business at 2:30."

Hedberg seems preoccupied. He delicately fingers an abrasion on his chin and I ask how he got it. "Aw, Russkowi," he says softly. "He gave me the elbow last night." Hedberg sounds almost embarrassed. "I don't mind bodily contact," he says. "Hockey should have that. But fighting is not hockey. Do you know that in Sweden, I never had one fight in my entire life in a hockey game. When I came over here and I got in my first fight, I just stood there and let the man hit me. After the game someone asked me, did you not think you looked foolish just standing there? I said no, I thought he looked foolish hitting me."

"Your first season here was really bad that way."

He nods solemnly. "It was. It was in our heads sometimes to go home, but



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"To pyramid this investment into retirement in less than ten years seems like magic, but in my opinion any man in good health who has the same ambition and drive that motivated me, could achieve such a goal. Let me give you a little history.

"I finished high school at the age of 18 and got a job as a shipping clerk. My next job was butchering at a plant that processed boneless beef. Couldn't see much future there. Next, I got a job as a Greyhound Bus Driver. The money was good. The work was pleasant, but I couldn't see it as leading to retirement. Finally I took the plunge and went into business for myself.

"I managed to raise enough money with my savings to invest in a combination motel, restaurant, grocery, and service station. It didn't take long to get my eyes opened. In order to keep that business going my wife and I worked from dawn to dusk, 20 hours a day, seven days a week. Putting in all those hours didn't match my idea of independence and it gave me no time for my favorite sport—golf! Finally we both agreed that I should look for something else.

"I found it. Not right away. I investigated a lot of businesses offered as franchises. I felt that I wanted the guidance of an experienced company—wanted to have the benefit of the plans that had brought success to others, plus the benefit of running my own business under an established name that had national recognition.

"Most of the franchises offered were too costly for me. Temporarily all my capital was frozen in the motel. But I found that the Duraclean franchise

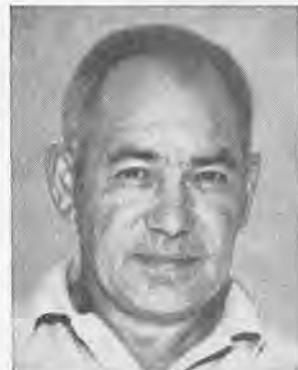
offered me exactly what I had been looking for.

"I could start for a small amount. (Today, as little as \$1985 starts a Duraclean dealership.) I could work it as a one-man business to start. No salaries to pay. I could operate from my home. No office or shop or other overhead. For transportation, I could use the trunk of my car. (I bought the truck later, out of profits.) And best of all, there was no ceiling on my earnings. I could build a business as big as my ambition and energy dictated. I could put on as many men as I needed to cover any volume. I could make a profit on every man working for me. And I could build little by little, or as fast as I wished.

"So, I started. I took the wonderful training furnished by the company. When I was ready I followed the simple plan outlined in the training. During the first period I did all the service work myself. By doing it myself, I could make much more per hour than I had ever made on a salary. Later, I would hire men, train them, pay them well, and still make an hourly profit on their time that made my idea of retirement possible—I had joined the country club and now I could play golf whenever I wished.

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fresh and clean. One Duraclean Specialist signed a contract for over \$40,000 a year for just one hotel.

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THE SPORT QUIZ

ANSWERS
from page 14

- 1-c. 2-b. 3-c. 4-c. 5-a-2, b-1, c-4, d-3. 6-b. 7-c. 8-b. 9-c. 10-b. 1973-74. 11-Jim Thorpe. 12-c. 13-b. 14-b., Memphis, Carolina, St. Louis, Kentucky, Indiana, San Antonio, Houston, Portland. 15-a. 16-c. 17-b. 18-a. 19-b. 20-b., for Saskatchewan, CFL.

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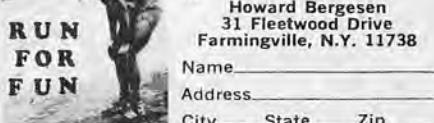
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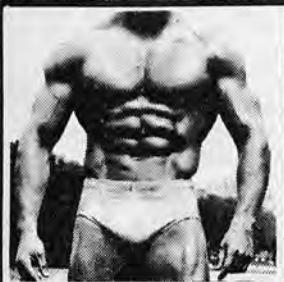
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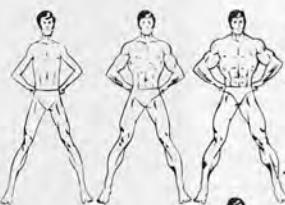
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we knew that we'd be giving up. The best way was to show them that we could not be intimidated. If somebody was vicious to me or to Ulfie, they would only get a penalty and we would get even by scoring a bunch of goals. That is the best revenge."

Hedberg is silent again. At length he resumes: "At night, Ulf and I would be lying in our beds in our hotel room and we would talk about it. It was an awful thing then. It was like going down a dark, empty street and wondering if somebody was going to jump out and beat you with clubs and sticks. We knew fear, real fear. But it is not so bad any more. Those goons have gone now. Now we get respect most of the time. I have even learned to fight a little bit. I am not the best fighter, but I can fight if I have to. But I prefer to play hockey."

"It is funny, Canadian players always say the Russian players are dirty and that is why the Canadian players have to play dirty against them. It is not so. I played the Russians 20-30 times. I didn't find them dirty at all. I think it is just excuses by the Canadians because they get frustrated."

At his house Hedberg sits on the Chesterfield in his living room while Gun-Marie serves a tray of coffee and cookies, then leaves. Hedberg fidgets, becoming increasingly nervous. He keeps looking out the window, craning his neck.

"Where did you learn to skate so superbly?" I ask.

Hedberg smiles. "I always could skate well," he says. "I have been on skates in my hometown since I was four or five years old."

Hedberg was born in Örnsköldsvik, a paper-mill town on the Baltic Sea, the youngest of two sons born to Stina Hedberg, a nurse, and her husband Bertil, a construction engineer. Anders played hockey on the frozen canals and ponds in the wintertime.

"Bobby Hull always says he shoveled enough snow off outdoor rinks and rivers to bury the city of Winnipeg," Hedberg says. "Well, it was the same with me as a child. The kids today miss something. I think it has to do with attitude, with desire. We had to play in freezing weather and often in darkness because in the middle of winter in my hometown the sun comes up for only one or two hours a day. You really had to love the game to do these things. The desire inside is an important part of sport, but the desire is not the same when all is done for you. When you have the best equipment bought for you, when you are driven to an indoor rink, when the snow is already shoveled off the ice for you, and when you are driven home again, it doesn't do any good. In

sports you don't win that much with talent as you do with your heart."

Hedberg steals a look at his watch, shifts nervously, looks out the window. I mention that the Swedish players I've met seem more refined than their Canadian counterparts, not as cynical or hard-edged. He nods. "That is because in Sweden the motive for playing the sport is love of competition, not big money. It is still, for the most part, a hobby. While good players make good money, many still have to supplement their incomes by working at other jobs. And education is heavily stressed. In 1970 the Vancouver Canucks wanted me to come over, but I wanted to get my education first. It was the same with the Detroit Red Wings a couple of years later. I had to go into the army for 15 months. It was my duty and I wanted to go." Hedberg, twice voted Sweden's top junior player, was also a top scholar at Stockholm's College of Physical Education. He and Dr. Gerry Wilson have co-authored a book, *Psychology of Ice Hockey: A Report*, and, in the off-season, they lecture at clinics and seminars

With 51 goals in 47 games last year, Hedberg broke a record held by Hall of Famer Maurice Richard and linemate Hull.



across Canada.

I ask Hedberg if he truly wants to play in the NHL someday. He looks out the window, looks at his watch and says: "I was disappointed when the merger did not go through. When I played the best in Europe, the next step was to play the best in the WHA. Now I have done that, and I want to play the best in the NHL. I like Winnipeg, we have lots of friends and we are thankful for what the Jets did for us. But I would still like the challenge of the NHL."

"They say you and Ulf's leaving would kill the franchise."

He shakes his head. "If a man pulls his hand out of a bucket of water with sand in it, the water will be stirred up for a little while. But soon it will settle down again. It is the same. Nothing is bad forever. I will honor my obligation to Winnipeg but, you know, I helped Winnipeg, too."

"Anders, have you heard from any NHL clubs personally?"

Suddenly, he stands up and starts pacing the room. "No," he says. "I have not. There is lots of time." He makes a big point of looking at his watch, sighs heavily, goes over to the window, looks out, turns around, walks across the room, sighing heavily. I think he wants me to leave.

"Anders," I ask, "have you heard from The Cat?"

"Who?"

"Emile Francis of St. Louis."

"No, no," he says. "No, no, no one. Not yet. I hear rumors but that is all." His face turns red. I look at my watch. It says 2:30.

At that moment, the doorbell rings, and Hedberg jumps. He looks flustered. His face grows redder. The door opens and in walks Don Baizley. Behind him is The Cat. Baizley looks petrified. Speechless. He keeps looking at me sideways. Hedberg shrugs and grins sheepishly, as if to say, "Don, I'm sorry, he wouldn't leave."

"Hi, Don," I say. "What brings you here?"

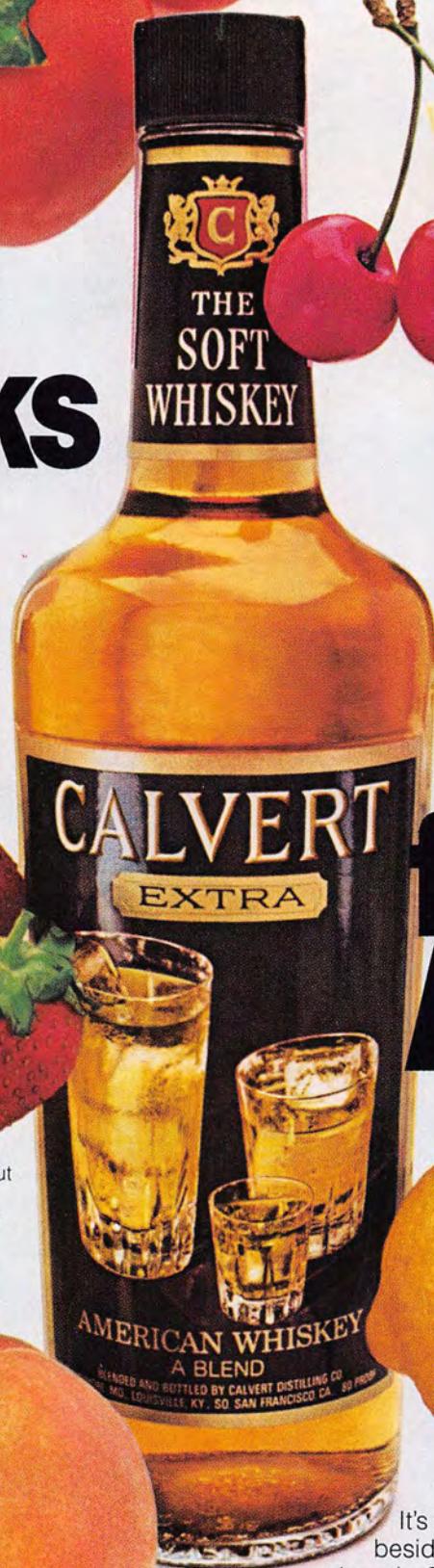
Baizley says nothing. He just moves backward across the room, his hands up before him and says, "Earl, don't ask me anything, don't ask me anything." He then stares at me in a stunned sort of way.

"Hi, Cat," I say. "What brings you here?"

The Cat looks at his feet for a few seconds, looks at Baizley, looks at Hedberg and then looks up at me. Caught redhanded, The Cat blurts: "Never mind what I'm doing here. What the hell are you doing here?"

With that Baizley hands me my coat, The Cat opens the door and Anders Hedberg gives me a gentle push out. ■

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